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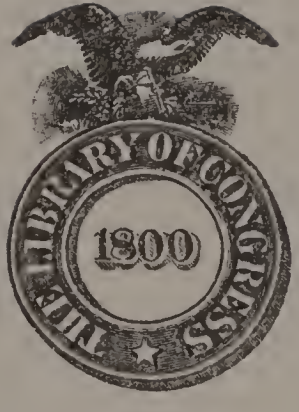
Charcoal Sketches

KATHARINE S. AYRES



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CHARCOAL SKETCHES

STORIES OF THE PRESENT-DAY SOUTHERN NEGRO

CHARCOAL SKETCHES

STORIES OF THE PRESENT-DAY
SOUTHERN NEGRO

BY
KATHARINE S. AYRES

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1927

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Dedicated to Memories of
My Old Kentucky Home

FOREWORD

IN the many stories of the colored folk of the South, the small-town descendants of the faithful servitors of Kentucky's aristocracy, have been somewhat neglected. The kindly, child-like nature, which is their rich heritage, is deserving of eloquent portrayal and the author hopes that these "Charcoal Sketches" will be read in the spirit in which they are written.

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CHARCOAL SKETCHES

STORIES OF THE PRESENT-DAY
SOUTHERN NEGRO

"EXHIBIT A"

A Sketch of Every-day Negro Life

"DE ole time 'ligin's good 'nough fur me," sang Aunt Viney, in her rich, melodious voice, as she busied herself about her work.

Saturday was always a busy day in Judge Morrison's kitchen, and the black face of the worker was shining with pride at the visible success of her efforts.

Aunt Viney's reputation as a bountiful provider was well sustained by the great pans of beaten biscuit and snow-white cake she was turning out. Getting ready for Sunday was an affair of no small importance in her life.

Faithfully she worked and cheerfully she sang.

The kitchen door opened and a small child burst into the room.

"Aunt Viney, give me some sweet cakes!" begged the little one.

"Law's a massy, chile, yo' sho' pesters me when I'se busy! Doan yo' know dat Sadday ain't no time

ter come in heah axin' fer cakes?" the woman answered chidingly.

Her actions belied the severity of her tones, for she got the coveted cakes from the jar. Taking up a liberal handful, the kindly face of the old negro woman broke into a broad smile as she gave them into the hands of the much-beloved little daughter of her mistress.

"Now, go 'long, honey, and doan worry me no mo'," she said. Withdrawing her adoring eyes from the vanishing form of the little girl, Aunt Viney returned to her culinary duties and occupied herself the balance of the day.

When the finishing touches of icing had been ceremoniously spread on the last cake, Aunt Viney began to get ready to go home. She was not without her customary bundle tucked under her arm. Great care had been taken that it should be as inconspicuous as possible, for like most helpers in the "white folks" kitchens, she was never anxious to attract any particular attention as she wended her way homeward.

The serene expression which she had worn, as she traversed the short distance to reach the alley where she lived, underwent, upon her arrival at her domicile, a complete change. A look of anxiety crossed her brow, although the sight which greeted her was not unusual.

On the front porch there lounged, in a chair well-tilted back, her liege lord, Sam, indolent, shiftless, a veritable thorn in the flesh of the hard-working wife. He was industriously engaged in whittling a stick, quite in contrast to his usual job of "jes' settin'."

Aunt Viney bestowed upon Sam a look of plain disgust and crossed the porch to enter the house. She next proceeded to spread upon the table the contents of the bundle which had accompanied her home, then, returning to the door by which she had entered, her tolerant voice called, "Come on, Sam; yo' supper's ready."

Sam arose slowly, stretched himself, shuffled inside and sat down at the table.

"Yo' sho' is one lazy nigger!" began his spouse. "Hear I'se been workin' hard all day an' yo' ain't even set yo' plate fur supper. Some time yo's gwine grow ter dat ere cheer; doan yo' ever git tired o' doin' nuthin'?" she demanded.

"Viney, I been doin' somethin'. I ain't feel extry. I wuz jes' settin' out thar takin' a little fresh air!" Sam's countenance assumed an aggrieved appearance.

"Well," replied his better half, "all I got ter say is, yo' could git as much fresh air weedin' de garden, an' it might improve yo' health, too!"

Sam's sole reply was a contemptuous sniff.

Supper continued in silence. After the evening meal was finished and the dishes cleared away, Sam's drooping health revived. While Aunt Viney was further busied making her own little home kitchen as spotlessly shiny as she had left the Judge's at the big house, Sam ambled off down town. So much was his health improved that he was soon able to join the other darkies, all bent upon the usual Saturday night program of congregating on the main street of the village.

Saturday night, in a Southern town, is not an event, it is an institution. Then, more than at any other time, does the Emancipation Act seem to be enforced, and woe unto the housekeeper who thoughtlessly infringes by requiring a late supper on this night of nights.

In contrast to the carefree temperament of Sam, was Aunt Viney, as she finished her work and prepared to go down town herself. Her grievances against Sam began to seethe within her bosom. Her patience with that "no 'count man" was getting near the ragged edge.

"How kin I bring dat nigger to his senses? He's smart 'nough at lovin'! Why can't he do his part at workin' too?" she mumbled. "I done *talk* myself ter death an' it doan do no good," she continued, while dressing, "but maybe I could skeer him some-

how!" Meditating thus, Aunt Viney finally arrived at the stage of adjusting her hat. At this moment, while she stood before her cracked mirror, her eyes fell on her open purse on the dresser, and she made the startling discovery that her week's wages were gone. Except for a nickel with a hole in it, which she was saving for Sunday collection, the purse was quite empty.

"Jes' lemme find dat nigger, Sam! Doan I know he done got my money? Ain't been nobody in dis heah house 'ceptin him!"

Aunt Viney got madder by the minute. Her wrath and indignation grew as she talked.

"I'll git him! He'll sho' find out he's made er mistake *dis* time!" Precipitately she started toward town. In vain, however, as she proceeded on her militant way did she scan the groups of happily, chatting negroes—her Sam was not visible.

"Miss Viney sho' has got somethin' on her mind," remarked one of her friends, as she passed—*and she had!*

Unlike the illustrious Light Brigade, she looked well to the left and right. The candy store was her goal, and her instinct had guided her correctly. There, sure enough, at the soda fountain were seated a young negro girl and the truant husband, quite oblivious to the rest of the world. Upon this scene descended the irate Viney.

"Thar yo' is, yo' no 'count nigger," she called. "I'll learn yo' ter steal my money an' spend it on some yaller gal!" whereupon she swept the feast to the floor and, taking the surprised Sam by the arm, marched him past throngs of amused friends, toward home.

"He'll suttinly git his!" said one of the spectators as they passed. Exactly what "his" was, kindly night shielded from solicitious neighbors.

The less charitable light of breaking day could have revealed Sam in the yard, sleeping heavily. The whole community had long been familiar with the family troubles of Aunt Viney, and the next day this latest occurrence was repeated with some merriment at Judge Morrison's dinner table. There was speculation as to the exact form of punishment Viney would mete out to Sam for this latest offense.

Monday opened the May term of court. Warm spring sunshine flooded the court room and revealed the dust-laden corners neglected, as usual, by the negro janitor. The room was pretty well filled by a crowd of idle curiosity seekers, as there was little of interest in the street outside.

Judge Morrison, before whom all the petty cases were tried, lounged in his chair of state, anticipating numerous tiresome affairs to be brought under his jurisdiction. His rather serious face was lit by a

kindly eye. The lines around his mouth expressed stern denunciation of the offender, but could, on occasion, be turned into appreciative humor.

Now, having listened all morning to numerous trite affairs, the Judge was recalled to his present duties by the announcement of the clerk: "Next case —Smothers versus Smothers."

Judge Morrison brought his thoughts back from the bright sunshine without, and his lazy gaze rested upon the vision in front of him. A twinkle momentarily shown in the judicial eye as he surveyed the woman before the bench, in private life, the good angel of his kitchen. She now appeared before him as complainant in the case of "Smothers versus Smothers."

Arrayed in all the finery usually kept for funerals and basket meetings, Aunt Viney, the fully conscious cynosure of all eyes, strutted rather then walked, to the seat assigned her. Her dark blue skirt and yellow waist were offset by a worn lace collar and a string of green glass beads. Her head was crowned by what, at first glance, appeared to be a spring salad, but on closer scrutiny revealed itself as a green straw hat garnished with tomato-colored flowers and leaves.

In striking contrast to her festive personality, was her husband. In dirty jeans and a blue and white jumper, he sat nervously fingering a worn felt hat.

Sam Smothers viewed his resplendent spouse with no degree of assurance. He tenderly rubbed a telltale bruise around his right eye while he noted the determined look on Aunt Viney's face and then settled himself resignedly in his chair.

"Case of Viney Smothers versus Sam Smothers, charges being: non-support, unfaithfulness and cruelty," read the clerk. A hush fell on the court room, and Aunt Viney was duly sworn in.

Then the Judge, looking down at her in a kindly manner, asked, "Now Aunt Viney, what do you charge to Sam?"

"I doan charge nuthin' ter Sam, Marse Jedge; ef I *did,* he couldn't pay fer it!"

There was a noticeable shaking of shoulders in the court room crowd and the Judge was suddenly bothered with a cough.

"Well, I mean," continued the Judge, "what complaint do you make against him?"

Aunt Viney looked at Judge Morrison, then turned a withering eye on Sam. The last named gentleman seemed to shrink in his chair and assume smaller proportions, while his better half, without removing her accusing eye from him, burst into an eloquent recital of her grievances. She told of her working and saving; she spoke of her patience and humiliation.

"I tell yo', Jedge," she continued dramatically, emphasizing her remarks with a vigorous shake of head, "Sam's one o' dese heah c'melion kind o' niggers—one day he's one thing, next day he's somethin' else. Jes' like them c'melions, too, he likes to lay hisse'f out in de sun an' res', while somebody else gets him his vittles an' 'tends like he's tired an' not feelin' well an' can't do no work."

Aunt Viney paused for a moment, for effect, and then her accusing voice went on: "Den when he gits his stomach full, out he's gone takin' my money I done work fur and spends it on some no count yaller gal!"

"So," said the Judge, "he not only does not support you but uses your earnings on someone else. Well—how about the cruelty?"

Aunt Viney hesitated and the Judge, happening to cast an eye in the direction of the accused, saw a grin overspread his black face. Conspicuously, Sam rubbed his bruised brow. Aunt Viney was stumped for a moment.

"Well, Jedge," continued the complainant, "thar's different kinds o' cruelty, and whut I done tole you 'bout his takin' my money, wuz cruelty 'nough." Viney Smothers sat down and Sam Smothers took the stand.

"Sam," said the Judge, "you have heard the

charges brought against you by your hard-working wife; what have you to say for yourself?"

Sam shuffled his feet uneasily, shifted his hat in his hands, and turned a scared face to the judge.

"I ain't got nuthin' to say, Jedge, 'cept 'bout dat cruelty; I ain't sayin' I ain't done what she say I done, but Jedge, take a look at my face an' tell me who yo' thinks is de cruelty part o' my family!"

The face was displayed—"Exhibit A", called a voice from the rear of the courtroom. The judge raised his hand to his mouth to hide a smile.

"Aunt Viney," said he, "are you responsible for this?"

"Yes, sir, I reckon I is," admitted Aunt Viney, and went on reminiscently, "yo' see, when I brung Sam home Sadday night, we had a little altercation an' Sam's face come in contact wid a rollin' pin. It wuz like de straw whut breck de camel's back."

The whole room burst into laughter and the clerk rapped for order.

"Well, Sam," said the Judge, "if you spent about a month on the rock pile, you might appreciate your home better."

Aunt Viney's anger had fast disappeared with the reciting of her woes and now at the verdict, a kindly impulse suddenly compelled her to intercede. "I tell yo', Marse Jedge," she interposed, "jes' yo' reprove

him like an' send him 'long home with me. Sam, he's so used to settin' on a cheer, he might never be no 'count, ef he set on rocks fur a month.

"Keep still, Viney," broke in Sam, "the Jedge says rock pile an' he mean rock pile." The defendant's voice sounded satisfied.

The judge took in the situation and he made a quick decision in favor of the proverbial "briar patch."

"Sam, Viney is right," said he, "you go along home with her, and if she has to bring you to court again, you won't have such a pleasant sentence."

The woman smiled and edged her way out of the court room arm in arm with her prodigal lord.

"Come on, honey, le's go home," one of her friends overheard Aunt Viney remark, and later in the afternoon, happening to pass the Smothers domicile, the same friend observed Sam taking a peaceful *siesta* on the grass under a tree in the little yard.

From within the cabin came the lusty voice of Aunt Viney, singing, "De ole time 'ligion's good 'nough fer me." Her friend gazed at the cabin door and a grim smile played about the woman's lips.

"I reckon I'll jes' go on," she remarked to herself, "don't b'lieve I'll stop to talk to Aunt Viney." She looked toward the sleeping Sam.

"I notice he's got dat ' 'Zibit A;' " and she quickened her steps.

WATCH DAT SNAKE

A Little Tale of the Small-town Kentucky Negro

AT the approach of the day for the annual basket meeting, there was an unusual stir of excitement among the Independent Sons and Daughters of Honor.

During the entire week, antedating this event, there had been much preparation among the colored population of Smithtown. The telephoning and planning necessary for the approaching occasion had sadly demoralized the regular work in the private families of the town.

Many a mistress had been wheedled into contributing a few eggs, or perhaps several cups of sugar for a cake, "jes' while I'se bakin' yours, please mam," —though it grieves us to state that it is possible some contributions had been made "unbeknownst" to the lady of the household.

The disturbance in Smithtown, however, was not confined to the mistresses alone, but the peaceful slumbers of the feathered folk of the community had been much agitated, as well. As a result of nocturnal visitors, Mr. Rooster uttering his clarion call to day, had discovered his family circle to be minus a wife or two—which but demonstrated that the Sons and Daughters of Honor had not followed the scrip-

ture to the letter. To them, the miracle of "feeding the five thousand" was all very well as literature, but the visible evidence of an abundance of food was more to their liking. As a race, they had always believed implicitly in the proverbial "bird in hand", particularly if said "bird" roosted in a conveniently obscure location.

Now, as the July sun shone down, it beamed upon a people contented, happy, and expectant.

Milly Brown, the acknowledged belle of the colored set, did not, however, welcome the festive day so joyously as did the others, for Milly was disturbed by an embarrassment of riches. Two particularly insistent suitors were desirous of her company for the basket picnic, both invitations having reached Milly at the same time. One "invite" was from the yellow skinned dandy, Lucius Jones, while the other came from honest, black, liver-lipped John Green.

As luck would have it, the two invitations had been extended in the presence of Milly's grandmother, old Aunt Cynthy, with whom this popular girl lived.

"Yo' sho' is got low taste", had remarked this sagacious, elderly person, after the departure of the two suitors. "I can't tell fo' de life er me, *whut* yo' let dat black John cum 'round heah fur, nohow. He's de ornriest-lookin' nigger ever I seed."

Milly looked a non-committal reply.

"Now, Lucius dar," continued Aunt Cynthy, "is a bright-skinned, dressed up fellar, an' mos' any gal would be proud ter be keepin' company wif *him*."

"Lucius likes hisse'f better'n he do anybody else," scornfully rejoined Milly.

"My Lawdy, Milly, I do b'lieve in my soul yo' prefers runnin' wif dat black scarecrow," and Aunt Cynthy disdainfully swept into the house, leaving Milly at the front gate, where her dusky swains had extended their invitations.

Oblivious to a youthful crap game in progress on the sidewalk nearby, quite unresponsive to the affectionate attention of a yellow hound-dog at her side, Milly stood, leaning on the gate post, reviewing the situation. In her heart of hearts she knew that no bright-skinned sheik could ever take the place of her coal black Valentino.

However, the insidious suggestions of the worldly-wise grandmother began gradually to permeate her consciousness and the mental vision of the splurge she would make with Lucius in an auto began to dazzle her ego. The frugal John, Milly realized, would be likely to walk her to the picnic grounds, or, at best, to escort her in his old horse and buggy. The contrast was too great, and pride finally conquered love.

On the arrival of the festive day, the summer

glare beat down upon a forsaken John, trudging, basket on arm, toward Childers' Grove, where the picnic was to be held.

In a new, white organdie dress, through which showed a gleam of sleek black arms, Milly stood at her gate, awaiting her bronze Beau Brummel and his auto. But the gaze which followed the receding figure of the dejected John was not without some qualms.

Aunt Cynthy had already departed. For hours she had been preparing for this event and had finally emerged a masterpiece of art. Her best black skirt, topped by a brilliant waist, became but background when one noted her crown of glory. "Oxized" to the 'nth degree, it glistened in the sunlight, a perfection of art set off by a pancake-shaped hat, which was adorned by a ravishing "regretta".

"Suttinly am a bilin' hot day," the elderly woman remarked in her company tone, as she trudged along with the others.

"Hope 't ain't gwine rain," responded a companion. "I heerd a rain crow dis mawnin' an' he sounded mighty discouragin'," she continued.

Ordinarily, optimistic Aunt Cynthy would have rebuked this pessimist for "puttin' a hoo-doo on de party", but her mind was on Milly and her beau.

In the meantime, after much polishing and cleaning, the gentleman had gotten into a semblance of

respectability an antiquated Ford, which he had hired for the occasion. His many attempts at cranking it had finally proven successful and now, far down the road, the wheezing and panting of the ancient car heralded the approach of Milly and her escort.

"Lucius sho' is some hot dog ter-day," remarked one of the girls, enviously.

"Ole thing sounds like it needs a dose o' ile," commented John, the rejected suitor, somewhat vindictively.

This far-sighted gentleman had rented out his horse and buggy for the day, and now, on his own "shank's mare" had overtaken the crowd, who had started ahead of him.

"Some folks is too stingy to hire a autermobile," disdainfully interjected Aunt Cynthy, recognizing the speaker.

Her words were scarcely audible above the noise of the approaching car, as down the road charged Lucius and his Lady Fair. The Queen of Sheba was never prouder than Milly in this moment of triumph. Scornfully disregarding the crowd, that trudged along on foot, she now turned an absorbed gaze upon her yellow escort. With admiration she viewed his stylishly clad form. A black and white checked suit set off to perfection the manly physique of the occupant of the driver's seat.

The speed of the auto had necessitated his pulling his oversized derby well down on his cone-shaped head, where it was held in place by the help of a pair of large ears. To those on the side of the road, there was a silhouette of derby, loose lips and Adam's apple frantically working up and down, as Lucius desperately clutched the steering wheel. The magnificent couple in the passing car made note of neither Aunt Cynthy nor John but, honking a horn, they dashed past the plebean throng.

The auto appeared a bit unruly as it coughed its way through the crowd, and Aunt Cynthy was impelled to make a hectic side-step in order to elude it. So sudden was her action that she lost her balance and rolled off the roadside onto the friendly grass. The contents of her generous basket scattered far and near, but more tragic still was the disarrangement of her "oxized" hair.

"Them autos am suttinly de 'vention ob de debil," she exclaimed, "an' folks ought ter be put in jail fur runnin' people offen de road," she concluded.

"A fool an' er engine 's bad company," remarked John naively, as he carefully gathered up the old woman's possessions and restored them to her. "I'll kerry yo' basket fer yo', Aunt Cynthy," he continued, as he helped her to her feet. "I don't ride much in flivvers, but I kin still tote anything I wants ter."

The hard heart of Aunt Cynthy began to soften a trifle toward this black-skinned knight, who had brushed off the dust with which the spluttering car had covered her.

"Cyars ain't fit fer niggers ter run," Aunt Cynthy remarked heatedly.

"No, mam, dey ain't," responded the sympathetic John, " 'specially when dey can't afford 'em. 'Tain't so bad ter keep money in yo' pockets," he continued, jingling some loose change in his trousers, and then: "It goes a heap furder dan a pocket full o' perfumed red handkerchief."

Aunt Cynthy kept a discreet silence, but visioned with some misgivings the crimson handkerchief affected by Lucius. Not too fast was her citadel to be taken, however.

John, accepting silence for approval, ventured further.

"Did yo' know," he remarked cheerily, after the first quarter of a mile had been passed in silence, "dat I dun made de las' payment on dat piece o' property ober by Jedge Thomas's place, dis week?"

Aunt Cynthy was not invulnerable.

"Did Milly know dat?" she inquired interestedly.

"No, ma'm," rejoined John emphatically, "I ain't tellin' Milly nuthin'. I ain't 'low ter *buy* dat gal. Ef she doan lub me widout knowin' 'bout dat land, she

kin have dat yeller trash who doan own nuthin' 'cept-in' de duds on his back an' him a'borrowin' money ter hire dat ole rattletrap he rides in."

He paused after his tirade, and a softer light came into his eyes as he continued, "But I sho' do lub dat lily o' purity, dat Milly-gal."

Aunt Cynthy gave an amused grunt, making, however, a mental note of the prosperity.

Trudging along, anticipation quickening their steps, the picnic grounds were soon reached, and all the unhappiness forgotten in the bountiful feast which was spread. There were fried chicken, and cake, and pies, and the ubiquitous watermelon.

In addition to these attractions, the presence of the Reverend Peter Vinegar was enough to assure the success of any basket meeting where he was to preach, and now, with ministerial mien and Methodist appetite, he circulated among the gathering.

After having sufficiently satisfied his rapacious hunger, the reverend gentleman surveyed the crowd, while the women cleared away the luncheon debris. He consulted his large silver watch several times and finally decided it was time to start the religious ceremonies. Sedately, he mopped his ministerial brow with his huge checked handkerchief and lustily cleared his throat.

"Now, brethren and sistren," he began in a sten-

torian voice and a smile which showed a gleam of white teeth, "gether yo'selves together fer de worship o' de Lord.

"It has been writ," he continued, "dat man shall not live by bread alone."

At his first words the seething crowd quieted down. Groups began to form and perfect silence settled on them as the spell-binder began to speak.

"Let us sing 'When de Roll is Called Up Yonder, I'll Be Dere'," began the Reverend Peter.

Musical voices blended in sweet harmony as the awe-inspired faces gazed at their leader. A response was unanimous. In the stillness which followed the hymn, the Divine arose. Looking over gold-rimmed spectacles which were perched on the end of his nose, he opened a well-worn Bible and spoke: "I take my text from de first verse o' de third chapter o' Genesis: 'De serpent wuz more subtile dan any other beast o' de fiel'."

He paused long enough to moisten his religious lips. Then, leaning impressively forward, a long bony finger was pointed at the waiting assemblage and he continued dramatically, "My subject is: 'Watch dat Snake'."

Black faces became tense.

"Yo' never kin tell when he's a'trailin' yo'. He mought be a'hangin' 'roun' now. Sometimes he's

a'creepin' under yo' feet; sometimes he's a'hangin' fum de tree waitin' to drap right down on yo'. What I says to one, I says to all—Watch! *Watch!* WATCH!" he shrieked with telling crescendo.

Glances on the ground and furtive survey overhead followed this admonition. At this tense moment, Aunt Cynthy, who had been listening with her eyes, ears, and mouth wide open, suddenly became conscious of a creeping sensation down her back. Involuntarily moving her shoulders to relieve the strain, she had a pronounced realization of some wriggling thing on her, and there swept over her a feeling of intense fear.

As Brother Vinegar repeated aloud "Watch dat Snake, it mought be on yo' now!", Aunt Cynthy let out an answering yell. Her alarmed cry drew the eyes of the whole assemblage. In an agonized voice she shrieked, "Yes, Brudder! It's on me now! Help! Help! Tak' it off!" and the old woman fell and rolled on the ground.

The attentive John, who had been sitting beside her, grabbed at her as she toppled over, and thus loosened her waist at the neck.

" 'Tain't nuthin', Aunt Cynthy," he reassured her, " 'ceptin' a fishin' worm." The wriggling intruder was quickly extracted.

A smothered laugh from behind the group

brought Aunt Cynthy to her feet, and she turned with blazing eyes to confront her tormentor. Squarely, she looked into the insolent eyes of the dandy, Lucius, who was shaking with merriment and suppressed laughter.

"Yo' thinks yo's mighty smart, yo' yaller-skinned nigger!" she exclaimed, glaring at the erstwhile popular Lucius. "Yo' oughter be 'shamed o' yo'se'f, puttin' worms down folks' necks and bustin' up meetin's this er way!"

Milly had tactfully left Lucius' side and now stood respectfully assisting her grandmother.

"Look a heah, Milly," began Aunt Cynthy, "doan yo' hev nuthin' ter do wid dis heah spen'thrift nigger. He ain't fit fer nuthin' 'cept ridin' ober folks in dat 'ere autermobile whut he dun borrowed money ter hire. Cum 'long home wif me," she concluded positively.

As the old woman finished her tirade, a hopeful John remarked, "Aunt Cynthy, ef yo' and Milly doan minds ter walk, I'll tote yo' basket home."

"I'se kind er tired o' ridin'," said Milly, with a coy turn of her head, coquettishly taking John's proffered arm.

"Yo' young folks walks too fas' fer my old laigs," remarked Aunt Cynthy, with returned equanimity. "Jes' yo' all go on an' I'll tak' my time an' cum wif

Sister Brown," concluded the scheming grandmother.

The crowd dispersed. Crestfallen, Lucius departed in search of his car.

For a moment he viewed his erstwhile triumphant chariot. Then taking off his coat and hat, the fallen hero attacked the crank with vicious vehemence. The pesky engine refused to turn over. One exceedingly faint snort was its only response.

After repeated efforts the snort developed into a sputtering, and the ancient engine shook rebelliously. "Fo' de Lord!" exclaimed Lucius under his breath, "dis heah cyar is jes' like er 'oman. Yo' spend all yo' time an' money on makin' it look fine an' den de fus' chanct it gits, it's ready to go back on yer!"

A derisive laugh interrupted these bitter words, as someone passing by called out, "Yo' looks mighty lonesome, Lucius!"

The deserted lover paid no attention to the intruder. His thoughts were on his successful rival.

"Dat liver-lipped John suttenly knows whut he's 'bout," was the bitter soliloquy. "The way ter ketch de cow is ter feed de calf—only he's a'workin' it backwards!"

The Ford wheezed in acquiescence, backfired, and went—dead!

ENTRY THIRTEEN

"DIS heah coon dawg sho' is got some style ter 'im!"

The speaker was none other than Sol Gill, who stood loose-limbed, shifty-eyed and dandyfied, one of a group of negroes, viewing the contestants for the forthcoming Jacksontown dog show.

Imitators by nature, the population of this colored suburb of Versailles, Kentucky, had acted quite in character, when they had decided to give this affair. It had followed as a perfectly natural consequence upon the heels of the Blue Grass Bench Show.

When that society event had closed its gates the previous Saturday night, and the spoiled canine darlings had been safely restored to their respective kennels, it had been thought that all interest in such affairs would abate for another year. However, when one of the judges of that fashionable meet chanced to drive through the colored locality a few days later, he was somewhat interested to observe in a vacant lot a considerable section fenced off with tobacco canvas.

Above an entrance gate, was to be noted an elaborate, printed sign, reading:

ThE JAckSOnTOwN BeNCh
SHoW fOr DAwgS

SATurDay EVEnin' FRom SEVen TO ELeVeN
GooD LUcK NUMberS PRiZeS GiVen AwAY

COME ALL

AdMisSiON 10CenTs—25C if yoU SHow a Dawg
BRinG Your oWn Bench & your own Dawg

Each day of the following week had seemed to kindle a keener interest on the part of the colored population, as the prospective event was passed along by word of mouth.

All fees were to be paid in advance, to avoid any trouble caused by possible entries failing to appear at the last moment.

Crittenden Jackson and Eldridge Thomas, the young colored gentlemen who had been inspired to start this affair, did not intend to take any chances on losing possible profits.

These two young men were careful to arrange all details so that nobody could get in who had not paid.

It was not known exactly what was to become of the moneys—at least it was not clear to anyone save, possibly, these two enterprising young negroes. They had made it their business to announce to the colored elite, that this was a swell thing to have. "Hadn't

all the white folks, who lived out on Cherry Hill, gone to the Blue Grass Show, de ladies all dressed up in dere fine sport clothes, and de mens in them short pants whut dey plays out doors in?"

The argument was unanswerable, so colored society was duly impressed.

In one respect the prospective "Dawg Show" differed from the Blue Grass Bench Show—no restrictions were made as to entries.

Heralded far and wide was the announcement that the dog taking first prize would win a coop of four chickens.

The second prize was to be two fine watermelons, and the third, a bag of smoking tobacco. The awards had been secured from various sources.

It might have caused some embarrassment to have explained just how or where the chickens had been acquired, but the tobacco had been generously donated by Mr. Sampson, the proprietor of the cigar store, down the alley, where the colored sports generally congregated.

The watermelons had not yet been procured, but as twelve hours of moonlight night was still to intervene before the big show, there was little doubt but that the second prize would be there.

Such prizes, and the fact that it was to be a wide-open show, naturally resulted in every man and boy

in the community preparing his four-footed pet for exhibition, and as there was never a male negro without a dog, the affair bade fair to be a great financial success—not only a monetary one, but a brilliant social affair as well, therefore several of Jacksontown's swellest hearkened as Sol Gill made his favorable comment concerning the perfection of his coon dog.

A derisive grunt from the happy-go-lucky Andy Holbert challenged him: "Does yo' call him a 'coon' dawg, Sol?" countered this gentleman, rising languidly from the soap-box where he had been sitting. "From de smell o' 'im," he drawled, "I'd call 'im a 'skunk' dawg!"

This bit of wit was evidently appreciated by the bystanders, for they burst into guffaws of loud laughter.

Sol, however, did not join in the merriment.

"Huh!" he finally ejaculated, "ef yo' niggers hed any sense, yo'd know dat de skunk smell, which he hav' retained a little perfume ob, only proves dat he wuz a good coon dawg, 'cause any dawg whut hunts coons is bleeged ter run up agin' a skunk sometimes."

This repartee momentarily silenced the crowd, but Andy ignored the temporary vantage gained by his adversary and continued the attack: "Well, maybe when he's coon huntin', de dawg do run agin' a

skunk, but how's yo' gwine ter prove it wuz a coon he wuz a *huntin'?"* he demanded.

Sol adjusted his derby hat on one side of his bullet-shaped head and with his shifty eyes again viewed his entry for the bench show.

"Searcher," he said, turning toward his dog, "dis heah am de mos' ignorant people whut ever congregated fur sport. All dey knows is nuthin' an' mighty little o' dat!"

Searcher, thus addressed, wagged his lanky tail and, raising a serious houndlike face, shook a fly from his nose. Sol Gill reached down and affectionately stroked his hound dog's ears, then addressing Andy, he demanded, "Whut yo' know 'bout dawgs? Yo' ain't got none!"

"Ain't got none? Why, nigger, yo'se crazy!" indignantly exclaimed Andy. " 'Co'se I'se got er dawg, an' whut's more I'se gwine bring her ter dis heah show an' beat all yo' all's dawgs!" And Andy included the group in a withering glance.

"Did Andy say he had er dawg?" asked Adam Chisley, coming to his pal's rescue.

"Dat's whut he specify!" chimed in another young negro buck, whose eye, however, did not wander from his own collie dog, busily engaged in the pursuit of an elusive flea. Her master watched her sym-

pathetically, but looked up as the conversation continued.

"Well, dat do beat me!" exclaimed Adam, and his derisive grin met with a responsive one from Sol. "Is anybody heah eber seen Andy's dawg?"

Nobody had. "Didn't know he had no fambly a' tall," remarked one of the group.

Adam laughed. "Well, I is seen whut he designates his 'dawg' but ef yo' axt me whut it look lik', I'd tell yo' it 'semble' a dirty wash rag more dan it favors anythin' else!"

His witticism was so apt that it evoked the applause of the entire audience, and Andy rose to leave.

As he leisurely wended his way down the street toward his shanty, his mind reverted to the recent conversation.

"'Tain't nuthin' de matter wid Tootsie Roll! She's jes' as fine as any o' dere dawgs an' whut's more ain't nobody 'round heah got er dawg o' her breed ter show!"

Cogitating thus, he failed to observe what appeared to be an over-sized tumble-bug making its way toward him. He stumbled over the little creature and it emitted a yowl which sounded strangely familiar to Andy.

"Fore de Lawd!" he exclaimed, "ef heah ain't my prize winner!" At the sound of the familiar voice,

the small bundle of mud tried to wag its tail, but there was no wag left in it!

Tootsie had collected, in her curly poodle coat, most of the burrs of the community, and, realizing her plight, the poor little creature had done her best to rid herself of these tormentors by rolling in every available mud puddle, with the result that she was so thickly caked with mud that she was much like a chunk of rough clay in the first stages of modeling.

Andy thrust his hands deeper into his pockets and gazed in horror at his pet.

"Whut yo' done gone an' done dis fer, yo' onery dawg?" he demanded. "Ain't I gwine hab trouble 'nough wid yo' taking dat prize, widout yo' pesterin' me wid de extry work o' gettin' yo' all scrubbed up?"

Tootsie Roll turned a clay-encrusted eye toward her master. From his tone she knew that she had displeased him. She made another effort to wag her little tail, but it was a more dismal failure than the first. It seemed to her poor little dog mind that her muddy coat was becoming harder and stiffer every moment.

She emitted a little whine, which was interrupted by an unfriendly laugh. Sol Gill and Adam Chisley had been silent witnesses to the meeting between Andy and his dog and now made their presence known by sarcastic merriment.

Their proximity stung Andy into immediate action. He reached down and lifted this bit of clay and tucked it protectively under his coat.

"Whut yo' got there, Andy?" demanded one of the newcomers.

" 'Tain't nuthin' o' your'n!" responded Andy, snuggling his bit of a dog closely in the crook of his arm.

" 'Pears like Andy's been makin' a mud-dauber's nest," said Adam, "look at his pants!"

Andy glanced down and viewed the tell-tale evidence.

With a grunt he turned and walked away toward his house. Arriving there, he went inside, closed and locked the door, tenderly placing his small burden on the floor.

"Yo' sho' am a disgrace ter look at!" he commented.

Tootsie Roll stood just where she had been deposited. Her bright little eyes gave back a mournful answer. The sight of her mud-caked body seemed to nearly paralyze Andy and all he felt able to do was to stand there and look at her. "Only one day ter git dis heah pup into her Sunday-go-ter-meetin' dress! Well," he sighed resignedly, " 'tain't no use ter cry ober spilt milk!"

The speaker walked over to the rickety wash-

stand. He gave a kick to the brick which served as a prop for one of the broken legs of this dilapidated piece of furniture.

"Git back whar yo' b'longs, ole brick!" he ordered, "I'se got trouble 'nough wid dis heah Tootsie on my hands, widout yo' tumblin' de washstand on my foots!"

He picked up the tin wash basin, and filled it from an old pitcher, then reached for the soap and looked at Tootsie.

"Cum heah, ole dawg," he said "yo' an' dat mud has got ter say farewell." This, however, was more easily said than done. Tootsie's master rubbed and scrubbed but her woolly coat defied his efforts.

"I reckon ain't nuthin' gwine save us," remarked the dejected Andy, " 'cept'n hot water an' dem two Gold Dustie Chillun!"

A forlorn and dripping Tootsie was placed on the floor, and soon there was much rattling coming from the small stove. Some premonition seemed to warn Tootsie, for she cast a beseeching eye toward her master, as the kettle began to steam. She shared with him a distaste for hot water and soap.

Disregarding her appealing glance, however, Andy proceeded to sprinkle a liberal supply of Gold Dust into the pan of heated water, then lifted the shivering little creature and placed her in the suds.

This time he was assisted in his efforts by an ancient scrubbing brush and aided thus, the hard mud now began to roll off.

"Hot dog!" exclaimed the delighted negro, "yo' sho' is gwine look fine now, an' yo' an' me's gwine feast on chicken fum our own coop, lil' dawg!"

Time and again was Tootsie Roll immersed before Andy was completely satisfied with his job. Then he produced an old piece of shirt, with which he rubbed her until her kinky little white coat fairly glistened.

"Now, I'se gwine put yo' in a clean box an' when to-morrow comes, yo'll be all nice fur de show," he concluded, suiting the action to the words. "Now, yo' go ter sleep."

Having made this arrangement, he locked his door and departed for an evening's pleasure with his friends. He felt perfectly confident of winning that enviable first prize at the dog show, and he whistled a lively tune as he strolled along.

"I'll jes' step in the five an' ten," he confided to himself, "an' git a ribbon to tie on Tootsie's collar."

His purchase made, he then sauntered down the alley toward Mr. Sampson's tobacco store. Several of his acquaintances were idling outside, and as the self-satisfied negro approached, he was hailed by Sol Gill.

"Hi dere, Andy," called the jeering voice, "how's de mud-dauber business?" A disconcerting grin on Andy's face answered the sarcasm.

"Lil' better den de skunk business, I reckon," was Andy's answer.

Until now Sol had felt absolutely confident that his "hound dog wuz gwine git dat coop o' chickens," but Andy's confident manner began to rouse misgivings in his mind. He wondered if the little "runt" in the street was his rival's sole hope for the prize.

Sol did not know who the judges were to be, but he had heard that one was to be a lady-judge and he knew that he possessed great prestige with the ladies.

Andy had never made much of a hit with the fair sex. Some of the dusky belles had been known to make fun of his lack of style. Despite these consoling thoughts there was nevertheless a feeling of uncertainty aroused at the sight of that placid grin of Andy's. Sol decided he had better talk it over with his pal, Adam, while Andy and the rest of the crowd were discussing the coming events.

When the company finally dispersed and Andy returned home and unlocked the door, all was silent and dark within. There was no sign of anything amiss.

The flicker of an old lamp which he lighted dispelled the gloom—"Tootsie?" he called.

There was no answering whine.

He went to the box and peered within. The blanket he kept for his pet was there, but to his dismay he discovered that Tootsie Roll was gone!

Suspiciously he looked around the room and to his horror he saw that the back door was ajar! He recalled that he had hooked it. Upon close scrutiny he discovered that the door had been pried open, for the hook lay upon the floor. This was not Tootsie's work—she had not let herself out!

"Maybe she's been kidnaped, or dognaped!" he said aloud. He had heard about people spiriting away children—why not dogs?

Disconsolately Andy sat down on the edge of his bed and began to try to solve the mystery.

"I'll bet Sol's at de bottom o' dis," he said aloud, savagely, recalling that gentleman's disappearance from the cigar store early in the evening.

Sitting dejectedly musing, he also remembered that they had made fun of his old clothes. He decided he must have some "glad rags" before the show.

But could he go to the show without Tootsie?

Way into the night he nursed his trouble.

The old lamp burned low and lower and, finally

with a sputter, went out. Andy took off his coat and shoes and, pulling a much worn quilt over his head, went to sleep.

With the first streak of daylight, he awakened; usually Tootsie aroused him by licking his foot, but today there was no Tootsie, and his heart sank as he realized the magnitude of his troubles.

He must first get some clothes to wear and he would then turn his attention to finding Tootsie.

He would try his luck at getting a job for the morning and maybe they'd pay him in clothes.

He wandered out in the direction of Cherry Hill. Colonel Ellis' was the first place he tried. They always wanted help about something.

The young yellow maid was engaged in sweeping off the porch, as he went up the side yard toward the back door.

"Hello, Andy," she called, "whut yo' want so early?"

"Howdy, Mis' Sally—reckon I kin git a job fur de mornin'?" he asked in his best company voice.

"I dunno," she answered, "but I'll axt Mis' Sue."

Soon Sally returned. Yes, he could cut the grass. The man who usually did it "wuz busy wid dat fool dawg show an' wouldn't be dere," so Andy could have the job, but he must promise to finish it.

Andy fell to work with a will. It was a big lawn

and the sun was hot, but he kept thinking of the clothes, with thoughts of Tootsie also frequently insinuating themselves.

He felt pretty confident that she would be at home when he returned, unless—fearful thought!—they had her fastened up somewhere. A weary Andy presented himself at the kitchen door when the job was finally finished.

"How much do you want?" inquired Mrs. Ellis.

"Please mam," he answered meekly, "could I git some o' yo' son's old clothes to wear?"

"What kind of clothes, something to wear to church?" queried Mrs. Ellis.

"No, mam," replied Andy, twirling his old hat nervously, "whut I needs is some o' dem sportin' clothes, ter wear ter de dog show."

Mrs. Ellis laughed merrily.

"Why, Andy, I have the very thing for you," and she quickly disappeared to return with a bundle all rolled up.

"These will fit you, with the help of a few safety pins," she added, with a twinkle in her eyes.

"Yassum, yassum, I'se sho' dey will suit fine, an' thank yo' mam," he answered eagerly.

Taking his bundle under his arm he wended his way toward home. " 'Fore de Lawd!" he suddenly exclaimed, as the big clock in the court house steeple

rang out five, "only two more hours ter find dat fool dawg an' git dressed fur de show!"

As he approached his house, he stopped short.

Crouched on the step was the truant Tootsie, but oh, what a Tootsie!

The delighted grin, which the sight of the little creature had evoked, turned to dismay when he saw her plight. Her silky white coat was all bedraggled and she held one little pitiful paw as if it were hurt. Andy opened the door of the house and shoved her inside. Depositing the bundle of clothes on the bed, he then turned to his dog.

"Well, I'se glad ter see yo' ef yo' is a sight," he said.

Hurriedly, he again warmed some water and then dipped her in. The dirt came off, but as he had used all the gold dust the night before, there was nothing to whiten her coat this time.

He must get her all snow white, for therein, he felt, lay her greatest claim to the prize.

While drying her after the bath, came the inspiration!

He had no talcum powder, but he did have some white flour. Hastily getting some from the bag on the shelf, he sprinkled the little creature's soft, fluffy coat liberally with it.

He was amply rewarded by the result and he

smiled broadly as he tied the bit of ribbon on her collar. He next fastened her to the bed post and proceeded to make his own toilet.

The bundle, for which he had labored all day, was opened and revealed its treasures. A pair of old knickers, a belted jacket, a cap and by no means least, some low shoes and a pair of golf stockings that fairly screamed!

Some half hour later, there emerged from the residence of Mr. Andy Holbert a vision of style. Arrayed in the perfection of elegance, he carried on one arm a covered basket, in which reposed the prospective bench winner.

At seven o'clock, the crowd had already begun to gather. Colored society had taken advantage of early suppers in the various white homes in order to array themselves the more perfectly.

The owners of the show dogs had arrived, and with deliberation and ceromony had escorted their pets to the various open boxes assigned to them when they had paid their entrance fees.

In the stall at the gates, Eldridge Thomas was pompously accepting receipts which he placed in a tin box, while Crit Jackson, resplendent in a checked sports suit, was ushering the entries to their places.

Into this hilarious crowd stepped a gentleman of fashion.

"Lawd a-Massy!" exclaimed Adam Chisley, "observe who's present!" Sol Gill, who at the moment was passing with pretty Tillie Johnson on his arm, stopped to look.

"Who's dat fine lookin' gentleman?" asked Tillie, who was visiting from Ziontown.

"Dat nigger?" said Sol, "oh, dat ain't nobody but Andy Holbert."

"He's a mighty swell lookin' feller," said Tillie, much impressed.

Andy was not feeling very swell at this moment, for Crit had just handed him his box number and it was—worse luck—No. 13.

Wending his way to the bench where the dogs were displayed, he found the place for his Tootsie and carefully uncovering the basket, tenderly lifted out the snow white poodle. She had been placidly enjoying the journey from home and her equanimity was not disturbed when she was deposited in the hoodoo numbered box.

After the assemblage had refreshed itself at the lemonade and peanut stand, general attention concentrated on the main attraction of the evening.

The judges had been chosen from the audience, two men and one woman. Lest some local belle should be offended, a visiting lady had been selected

as the female judge, and this choice was Miss Tillie Johnson, Sol Gill's companion.

Now, taking an arm of each of the gentlemen judges, a round of the bench was slowly made.

There were several collies, three fox hounds, two Airedales, several bull dogs of uncertain lineage, a sprinkling of fox terriers, but only one poodle.

The judges paused before each box and minutely looked the dogs over. The motley display of mongrels was observed seriously by the judges, while the owners stood solicitously by.

When No. 13 was reached, the lady judge stopped.

There beside the box, stood that stylishly clad gentleman she had previously remarked and she smiled sweetly into his eyes. Then she turned toward his entry, the immaculate Tootsie Roll.

"Oh, yo' lovely lil' dawg!" she exclaimed, "an' yo' name is so purty too—'Tootsie Roll'!"

"She's too lil'," objected one of the other judges, "I lik' a big dawg, lik' a hound."

"Oh, but you couldn't tak' a big dawg in yo' arms an' love it," coyly said the young lady, "les' talk it over," and, obedient to the suggestion, the three judges adjourned to the part of the enclosure set aside for them, and deliberated importantly.

The conference was finally finished and the lady-

judge stepped forward with the blue ribbon held in her gracious hand.

The owners of the various dogs waited expectantly.

Sol Gill stood beside his dog and smiled at the doner, with great assurance. Had not the ladies always favored him? This surely would be no exception to the rule. Miss Tillie Johnson, walking coyly, passed down the line and came to a halt before number 13. She tied the blue ribbon on Tootsie Roll's collar. There was applause and the crowd surged forward.

Andy Holbert was not accustomed to such good luck and stood confusedly before the fair judge.

"Please let me hold the lil' darlin' a minute," she pleaded, and before Andy realized it, she had lifted Tootsie Roll from her box and now held her close to her face. With a sinking feeling within him, Andy watched this fondling of his pet.

Tillie cuddled the dog for a moment, then held her at arm's length to admire her.

Tootsie Roll was growing a bit tired of all this fondling and to Andy's horror suddenly began to shake herself vigorously in protest.

A white cloud rose all about her, and Tillie and Andy were choked in a common cough. From this they emerged laughing.

"Does she shake off her purty white coat?" asked Tillie, mirthfully.

"Jes' yo' com 'long wid me, Miss Tillie," said Andy, masterfully clutching her arm, "an' I'll tel' yo' all 'bout it."

Once outside the crowd, they laughingly dusted the flour from their clothes and Andy offered his arm to Miss Tillie, and together they marched away down the street, the prize winner trotting placidly at their heels.

Some half block away from the show, the lady suddenly remembered the prize.

"Oh, Mr. Holbert, yo' clean forgot de chickens!" she exclaimed.

" 'Tain't no wonder," replied Andy, and he gave her arm a gentle squeeze.

Leaving her to guard the small Tootsie Roll, the happy negro returned, in a very few minutes, with the prize carried in his two arms.

Sol Gill disconsolately viewed the little procession from afar.

He grimly beheld his girl and the coveted prize disappearing together in Andy's company and he mused bitterly to himself: " 'Chicken' has sho' got a mighty hold on our race!"

UNCLE MOSE'S HANTS

A Reminiscence

"THAR ain't no sech things as Hants, Huh?" grunted Uncle Mose, "doan yo' all try ter tell me dat," and he settled himself in his rickety chair, while he looked over the attentive gathering.

"Ain't I dun seen wif my own eyes dis heah Hant a'rarin' an' a'chargin' when dere wan't nobody around? I tell yo' all, you young niggers has done got so smart-ellicky wif all yer train ridin', an' automobilin' an' schoolin' dat yo' ain't got sense 'nough ter listen ter nuthin' us ole folks got ter say!"

The ancient oracle gave a contemptuous sniff and looked at his open-mouthed audience.

"Aw, Unc' Mose, you know no ghost is foolin' round heah now-a-days, so near de road too, where ever'body is passin'." The speaker, a bright skinned sprightly young negro, was dressed in all the imitation grandeur of his generation. From the crown of his properly creased soft felt hat to his dove-grey spats and shiny tan shoes, he was the embodiment of up-to-date modernity.

All the refinements of civilized Chicago had "Mr. Thomas Wadsworth Jackson," as he was proclaimed by the aristocratic calling cards which had been especially designed for him by a celebrated sidewalk artist of that city. These cards of Mr. Jackson's had been the envy and despair of all the other young bucks of his set ever since his recent return.

Mr. Jackson, it followed quite naturally, was an authority among the damsels of his race. Whenever he chanced to come down the street dressed in his city finery, there was much powdering of brown noses and craning of necks while the young dandy walked majestically past.

Now the center of an admiring group he stood, viewing tolerantly old Uncle Mose. A man of the world, such as he, could well afford to allow an aged narrator to ramble along.

Out of the tail of his eye, the old man noted the patronizing attitude of the younger darky. Unabashed by this superiority, however, the venerable old negro turned squarely around.

"Now look heah, young feller," he said accusingly, "maybe you larned mos' everythin' them Chicargy people could tell yo', but when yo' comes back heah an' tries ter bulldose me 'bout somethin' I seen wif my own eyes, I jes' 'low yo' doan know nothin'!"

The old man's tirade was greeted by silence. Un-

challenged he chewed his quid of tobacco. The silence was finally broken by young Tilly Johnson.

"Uncle Mose," she asked respectfully, and the lounging group listened with eagerness, "whut wuz the Hant 'er doin' when yo' seen it?"

"Law, yo' chillun doan know 'nough ter put in a thimble!" The old man's self-assurance had returned.

"Y'all want ter know 'bout dis las' Hant? Well, dis heah ain't de first Hant I ever seen." The eyes of his audience perceptibly widened as the old man warmed to his subject.

"Some o' yo' seems ter hev sense 'nough ter wan' ter know 'bout things," he remarked, with an appreciative nod toward Tilly. "Well, I'll tell yo' what it wuz 'er doin'; dis heah Hant o' Miss Mary Lou is still 'er takin' on ober my young Marse John."

"Tell us about 'em, Uncle Mose," said the girl in an awed voice.

A tear, which was brimming from the eye of the old retainer, was checked. He swallowed a lump in his throat and settled himself comfortably in his chair.

"Yo' see, it wuz dis way," continued the natural born story teller, reverting to his theme, "Ole Marse Middleton nebber had but one chile, an' he sho' wuz set on her. She wuz a purty, lively little lady an' all

de young gemmens fur an' neah wuz callers at de Middleton home. Miss Mary Lou, tho', ain't payin' no special mind ter any ob 'em. She wuz jes' lik' a white lily, a'noddin' an' a'swayin' in de breeze, an' all dem young gemmens wuz lik' bees a'tryin' ter light, an' her nebber kep' still long 'nough fur 'em ter git no honey." He paused and shook his old white head reminiscently before he continued. "Arter 'while, 'long cum my young Marse John Mead. My young Marse wuz de king bee ob 'em all!

"Old Marse Mead dun own nearly all de country an' he hed kep' dis only son o' his'n away ter school an' trabellin' in furrin' parts, an' dis way Miss Mary Lou ain't nebber seen my young Marse since she wuz a little gal. Now, when Marse John cum home from all his collegin', he first seen Little Miss at a big party at Marse Calhoun's, who lived on de nex' place ter Marse Middleton.

"My Liza wuz a'waitin' on de dressin' room, an' she say she wuz a'peepin' through de do' an' seen Little Miss when she met Marse John, an' Liza say, ef Little Miss had a'been a peach, Marse John would a' et her up right dar!"

Uncle Mose paused long enough to change the location of the quid of tobacco, and very deliberately spat upon the ground. There was no possibility of

the attention of his audience straying, so the old man took his time in resuming.

"Arter dat, de other young gemmens jes' nacherly took a back seat. My Marse John ain't giv' nobody no show. He an' Miss Mary Lou wuz a' horse-backin' in de mornings an' a' courtin' in de evenin's.

"Yo' all see, I wuz Marse John's body servant an' my Liza she waited on Miss Mary Lou, so dat's how I knows all de inside track."

The explanation was satisfactory.

"One night," continued Uncle Mose, "when I wuz a' fixin' my Marse John's shirt studs an' things, he wuz a' singin' ter hisse'f an' a'walkin' up an' down de room wid his hands stuck proud-like in his pants pockets, an' already he looked like a bridegroom.

"Suddenly he stopped his paradin' an' sez to me, he sez, 'Moses, I'm a very happy man!'

" 'Yessur,' sez I.

" 'Moses,' he sez, 'if Miss Mary Lou and I gets married, then you and Eliza can too,' an' he chuckle ter hisse'f.

"I ain't sayin' nothin' 'cept 'Yessur,' 'cause I 'lowed as how Liza an' me gwine tak' up anyhows."

The old man smiled contentedly at some tender memory of his own and continued, "purty soon Marse John wuz off on his horse, gone a'visitin' Little Miss.

"I set up a long time a'waitin' fur him ter cum home, an' den I jes' drap ter sleep. I must a'fell outer de chair, 'cause when I waked up, de moon wuz a'shinin' in my face, an' I wuz on de floor.

"I reckon it wuz purty late, 'cause things wuz powerful still, an' all I heerd wuz a ole squinch-owl a' tahooin' in a tree, an' it made dis nigger feel mighty shivery!"

A perceptible tremor passed over the audience.

"Jes' den," the awed voice of the old man thrilled his listeners into horrified expectation, "I heerd de do' open soft-lik' an' I reckon as how Marse John done cum back from his courtin'."

"Pooh!" interrupted Thomas, in a disgusted aside, "ain't nuthin' skeery 'bout dat!"

Uncle Mose did not deign even a glance in the direction of the skeptic, but continued in the same hushed voice, "he cum a'walkin' right into his room an' never say a word.

" 'Dat you, Marse John?' sez I. He ain't said nuthin' but goes ober ter his desk an' fumble wid dat little drawer whut wuz in de middle.

" 'Wait a minit, Marse John,' sez I, 'an' I'll make a light.'

"I goes ter de table an' strikes a match ter light de lamp an' den turns 'round ter see whar he is, an' —*he ain't nowhar!*"

Young Tilly drew closer to the well-pressed sleeve of Mr. Jackson's Chicago suit.

"Nowhar a-tall," went on Uncle Mose, "an' I purty nigh fell ober! I looks all 'round dat room an' dere ain't nobody dere!"

"Well, yo' oughter seen dis heah nigger makin' tracks outer dat room. I runs down de back stairs an' purty nearly knocks ober Milly, who wuz a'comin' in kinder late.

" 'Whut fur yo' dun bust yo'se'f open a'runnin' in heah?' sez dat cook-'oman ter me.

" 'I dun see a Hant!' sez I.

" 'Whose Hant?' sez she, wid her eyes big.

" 'My Marse John's,' sez I, all outer breath.

" 'Gwone way fum heah nigger,' sez she, 'How cum yo' dun seen a Hant ob somebody whut ain't daid?'

"Dat kind o' got me, an' I scratch my haid an' say, 'I dunno, 'oman.'

" 'I reckon yo' *dunno*,' sez she, kind o' scornful like, 'Yo' better go ter bed an' not tech no more o' dat spiritchus drink on de sidebode!'

"I goes ter bed accordin' like an' nex' mornin', when I gits up, I goes ter Marse John's do', same as allus, ter git his boots ter black an' dere ain't no boots dere.

"So I knocks on de do', kinder solf-like an' dere

ain't no answer. I opens de do' an' looks in, an' his bed ain't been teched!

"I runs down quick ter ole Marse's do' an' knocks, an' he say 'come in', an' I look in an' ole Marse wuz gittin' dressed.

" 'Ole Marse,' sez I, 'my Marse John ain't never slept in his bed a'tall all night."

"Ole Marse turn 'roun' an' say onconcerned-like, 'Didn't he cum in last night?'

" 'Yessur,' I sez, 'he cum in' leastwise I *heerd* him cum in, an' go ter dat lil' drawer in his desk an' fumble wid it, den when I gits him a light he warn't nowhars.'

"Ole Marse looks at me hard an' he sez, 'Moses, what did you drink last night?'

" 'I ain't drink nuthin', sure,' sez I an' ole Marse laugh an' say, 'well, I reckon your young Marse has spent the night at the Calhouns.'

" 'Yessur,' sez I, but I warn't convicted." The old white head shook dubiously.

The spellbound listeners made not the slightest movement. Even doubting Thomas stood in open-mouthed attention.

"It wuz at breakfast," continued Uncle Mose, "an' Ole Marse wuz a'eatin' his waffles, when heah cum a feller a'gallopin' up de front yard."

" 'Where's Mr. Mead?' sez he, an' Ole Marse hearin' him callin', cum to de do'.

" 'Sur,' sed he, a'takin' off his hat, 'I am sorry ter hev' ter tell yo' dat we hev' found yo' son's body in de ribber below dat ole rickerty bridge dat leads de short cut to de Middleton place.' Ole Marse jes' stood dere an' dat white trash went on a'talkin'.

" 'De bridge mus' a'fallen through when his horse stepped on de loose planks,' he sez, 'cause he an' his hoss wuz in de ribber, pinned under de timbers whut give way.'

"Ole Marse neber move, he jes' look lik' he wuz glued ter de spot, an' I runs up behind him an' tak' his arm an' hep' him into de house.

"Den I runs outside an' say ter dat white feller whut brung de news, 'When yo' reckon dat happen'?'

" 'Must a been around midnight,' sez he, 'fur dey say he left de Middletons 'bout midnight.' When he says midnight, I 'members dat de night before, de moon wuz a'shinin' on dat little white marble clock on Marse John's mantelpiece an' it say it wuz arter dat time, when I seen Marse John cum in.

"Den I knowed fur sho' whut it wuz I dun see—*my Marse John's hant*—dat's whut it wuz!"

Uncle Mose had risen to his feet as his oration reached this climax. He stood now, staff in hand and gazed at his audience triumphantly.

A sympathetic sniffle came from one of the colored girls.

"Whut happened ter Miss Mary Lou?" asked Tilly.

Uncle Mose shook his head.

"Little Miss, she jes' tuck on somethin' awful an' my Liza say, ain't nobody kin comfort her. Yo' all see, she lubbed Marse John all de time, but ain't wanter say 'yes' so quick when he axt her ter wear his ring he dun brung her dat evenin'.

"Liza say, she heerd 'em a'talkin' on de porch behin' de vines; dat Liza o' mine wuz a'peepin' an' she tell me dat when Little Miss say she won't tak' de ring den but maybe later, my Marse John riz up, all hurt-lik', an' went out an' got on dat hoss o' his'n an' rid away fas'.

"Dat mad ridin' sho' wuz his end, 'cause he tuck de short way home an' Death wuz a'waitin' fur him on dat ole rickerty bridge, an' pulled him thro' de ole rotten planks!"

Uncle Mose sat down, rocking himself to and fro, his voice having taken on a dirge-like chant. His audience continued to gaze at him in fascinated attention and as he announced the fate of his young master, they fairly rocked and shook in sympathy.

Mr. Thomas Wadsworth Jackson it was who broke the tension, "Did dey find de ring on his body,

Uncle Mose?" inquired this skeptical Chicago product.

"No surree!" answered Uncle Mose. "Dat ring wuz a'layin' in dat lil' drawer in Marse John's desk whar his Hant dun brung it," and Uncle Mose cast a triumphant look at the doubting one.

Mr. Jackson dusted, with an elaborate bordered handkerchief, a tiny particle of dust from one of the dove gray spats. He regained his prestige with the action.

"Well, Uncle Mose," he condescended, "that was long ago, an' things look kinder different ter us moderns. This heah Hant we is all a' cogitatin' 'bout is jes' plain impossible. In dis heah day of knowledge an' improvement," and Mr. Jackson swelled with importance, "dere ain't no Hant a'hangin' 'round heah in de grave-yard, particular so near de road where folks is a'passin' day an' night too."

"All right, young yaller nigger," sneered the old man, "yo' knows so much, jes' yo' go out thar arter de moon is up, an' find out whut *yo'* see in dat grave-yard!"

"I ain't hav' ter go to no grave-yard ter know 'tain't no Hant," answered Thomas.

"Mr. Thomas is a'skeered ter go!" giggled Tilly.

"Who's a'skeered o' whut?" challenged the libeled Mr. Jackson.

"Yo' is," answered Uncle Mose grimly, "didn't a feller tel' me dat las' week he wuz a'passin' de grave-yard, an' seen a Hant a'movin' 'round Miss Mary Lou's grave?"

The crowd sobered.

"An'," went on Uncle Mose, "didn't Snowball Trimble tel' me dat las' night he seen de same thing? It wuz a'movin' its arms up an' down an' a'climbin' up on Miss Mary Lou's tombstone, an' a'shakin' its head mournful-like! Po' Little Miss! she ain't find no res' arter all dese years!"

"Aw, Uncle Mose," broke in Thomas. "Snowball's allus seein' things! I'll jes' go out ter that grave-yard an' tel' yo' whut is really there and when I cums back," he continued impressively, "I'll tel' yo' there ain't nuthin' there, an' yo' got ter b'lieve me."

"We sho' will," chimed the fickle crowd; so much for the loyalty of an audience.

Uncle Mose gathered up his staff and rose to take his leave.

"Thar wuz 'nother doubtin' Thomas onct!" declared he, as he departed.

The listeners dispersed, Tilly and Mr. Jackson leaving together.

"Lemme go with yo' ter the grave-yard to-night," purred Tilly.

"Aw, I doan need no company, I ain't a'feered o'

no Hant!" The young negro puffed himself up with pride.

" 'Co'se I knows yo' ain't a'feered, but I jes' nacherly wants ter go too," she murmured.

Thomas Wadsworth Jackson was true to his sex; no "purring" female could fail to awaken his gallant nature.

"All right," said he, "yo' can go, but jes' doan let nobody know we's goin'."

Later, they took a walk waiting for the moon to rise.

"Now she's a shinin' good, Til! les' go look fur Uncle Mose's Hant!" said Tom, and they turned their steps towards the old grave-yard. Up to the gate of the white folks' cemetery they crept.

It was so very still! Involuntarily they drew closer together. A screech-owl began to hoot and they thought of what Uncle Mose had told them about the owl that hooted when his young master died.

The burying ground was small and the two young negroes knew the location of the Middleton lot.

Leaning on the gate they waited. There was a stirring of leaves in the trees above the graves. Was it the breeze—or could the sound be the sad sighing of departed spirits?

The watchers felt the ghostly influence.

Suddenly Tilly grabbed Tom's arm, "Look!" she

whispered. Tom looked, and his straightened hair began to rise.

There, close beside Miss Mary Lou's grave, stood a white object. Slowly it moved, shaking its head from side to side in a mournful fashion. Then, with apparent difficulty it mounted the head-stone and raised its ghostly arms on high and then despairingly lowered them.

"Uncle Mose sho' wuz right!" In his alarm Tom reverted to type.

"Oh Tom! it suttinly is a Hant!" shakingly answered Tilly, creeping closer. Tom did not resent the familiarity. The pair were rooted to the spot.

Three times the "spirit" raised its phantom arms toward heaven, and three times hopelessly dropped them. The shivering and trembling of the mulberry tree was the only sound in this city of the dead.

But, at this tense moment, the moon broke through a clear place in the trees and illumined the Hant, stepping down from the head-stone of the grave.

Tom and Tilly were fascinated by the terrifying sight!

"Oh Lawdy! it's a'comin' fur us!" gasped Tilly, turning to run.

"Hold on!" commanded Tom, masterfully grasp-

ing the arm of the frightened girl, "doan yo' see what dat is?" and opening the cemetery gate he pulled the trembling one inside with him.

The terrifying object assumed a more natural appearance and approached the twain. It came munching the leaves that it had so lately pulled from the mulberry tree above Miss Mary Lou's grave.

Stopping when it observed the watchers, it lowered its head and uttered a familiar "Ba-a-ah."—IT WAS A GOAT!

Triumphantly, Tom pulled Tilly's arm within his own and they turned and walked toward home.

"We sho' is got de laugh on Uncle Mose now!" said Thomas.

"I 'specs *all* Uncle Mose's Hants is jes' goats, doan you Tom?" laughingly asked Tilly.

Thomas Wadsworth Jackson grew suddenly pensive. Into his mind had entered a disturbing thought. He recalled Marse John's ring! No "goat" had put it back into that little drawer in Marse John's desk!

"Well, honey," said Tom, generously, "I reckon we's got to 'low old folks some privileges. Les' jes' let de ole man b'lieve what he disremembers!"

THE JIGGER MAN

PRINCETON! Glorious November sunshine shedding its resplendence over the throngs.

At the edge of the campus, Sally Rose, sitting in state, gazed in bewilderment at the multitude.

"Wonder whar all des heah white folks come from? Mus' be some job ter feed 'em!" mused the girl, recalling her erstwhile position as helper in her mistress' kitchen back down south in Jacksonville. "Looks lik' all de whole world am present," she remarked to herself. "I suttinly never 'spected ter be a'settin' heah in a closed cyar autymobile," she thought as she gazed interestedly at the passersby.

She was much pleased with herself. She felt her importance as a part of a great fashion parade, and her feminine heart beat quite as excitedly as that of any of the white folks who assembled at the Princeton football game.

It was on this day that the loyal followers of the Yale blue and the Princeton orange and black had congregated for their annual battle with the pig skin, and as Miss Evelyn's maid, Sally Rose had been brought to care for the extra wraps and the

lunch kit, while the beloved mistress attended the game.

A striking blue hat worn by a very stylishly dressed young white lady attracted the attention of this guardian of the luncheon box. The wearer of the brilliant headpiece passed, leaning on the arm of an escorting college boy and a responsive smile lit up Sally Rose's brown face as she looked at the happy pair, and an involuntary sigh escaped her lips. Her heart, too, gave a queer little bound, as she buttoned close about her the warm coat, which had served her Miss Evelyn the previous winter.

The sight awakened a flood of reminiscence which surged over her, and she recalled her own colored swain back down yonder in Jacksonville.

When Miss Evelyn had suggested bringing Sally Rose north with her, the girl's elation at the prospect of a trip on the steam cars had been somewhat overclouded by the thought of leaving her faithful steady, Zeke.

Though somewhat scornful of him while she knew he was near, Sally Rose was, nevertheless, not altogether sure what effect absence might have on her midnight-colored suitor. However, she would have died rather than admit her qualms.

When, as was his custom, he had come to the back door of the home on that eventful Friday, with his

basket full of shrimp for sale, Sally Rose had very flippantly told him of her intended trip.

Zeke had been undisguisedly crestfallen. Fridays had always been red letter days for Zeke.

"Whut yo' wan' ter go ridin' on dem steam cyars fur anyhow," he complained, "wid nuthin' 'ceptin' a fresh yaller nigger porter ter look at?"

"Oh, yo's jes' mad 'cause yo' got ter stay home!" retorted Sally Rose. "I'se gwine ter see de world an' 'sociate wid stylish, dressed up, 'ristocratic niggers! I'se been foolin' way too much o' my time on niggers what ain't got nuthin' but ole second hand duds ter wear an' a'sellin' swimps fer a livin'!" and Sally Rose tossed her head and turned away.

Zeke was the picture of despair as he gazed sadly at her. His loose, dirty pants, old battered straw hat, and faded shirt but added to his disheartened appearance.

"But, Honey," he pleaded, "yo's a'breakin' my heart, leavin' me down heah!"

"Ain't nuthin' breakin' yo' heart!" she rejoined. "Somebody might break yo' pocket-book an' that wouldn't take long—but yo' heart!" She threw back her head and gave a derisive laugh. "Why, Zeke, I 'spects yo' heart's jes' lik' a swimp, yo's been 'sociatin' wid 'em so constant!"

This might have resulted in a real breach had Sal-

ly Rose not gone immediately into the house and closed the door, thus preventing an answer.

But when the day to depart drew near, Sally Rose had grown somewhat dubious, and less sure of her independence.

When finally the train was ready to pull out of the Jacksonville station, and a bunch of jasmine had been pushed through the iron railing by a very forlorn Zeke, Sally Rose's heart gave a regretful thump and a repentant tear trickled down her brown nose as she said a final good-bye.

The fact that the flowers exhaled a perfume of jasmine combined with that of shrimp did not depreciate their value to Sally Rose.

But Miss Evelyn, in a less romantic mood, surrounded by numerous books and boxes of candy had paused, chocolate cream in hand, and sniffing the air, had remarked, "My goodness! Sally Rose, it's easy enough to tell where your farewell token came from!"

Sally Rose had meekly answered, "Yassum".

As weeks had become months, there had arrived but one missive from Zeke.

This much read and re-read epistle, together with her memories and dreams, was all Sally Rose had to hold her to her old love.

Now, in the glory of this autumn afternoon, the

girl's heart turned towards the many couples who passed her by with a re-awakening yearning for her black shrimpman.

Her responsibility as custodian of the car and wraps did not keep a feeling of loneliness from creeping over her and she began to experience that solitariness which can be felt so keenly in a crowd.

She could hear the bands playing, and the sound of many voices. The Orange and Black, and the big Blue banners waved from many places, and cheers, and more cheering rose on the air. Occasionally silence seemed to hold the vast assemblage spell-bound, and then did Sally Rose begin to distinguish other sounds.

A vender near the entrance gate kept calling, "Get your colors here, flowers or banners."

Finally another closer sound began to invade her consciousness, "Heah's yo' nice fresh samwiches, any kind yo' kin axt fer, de Jigger Man's got," called a voice.

Sally Rose's ear caught the queer name. "What's he a'callin' hisse'f?" she wondered.

"Nice—fresh—samwiches," reiterated the voice, drawing still nearer.

Among the automobiles appeared a very stylishly dressed gentleman of color, the owner of the voice.

The costume of the gentleman was altogether col-

legiate. Large baggy trousers, accompanied by a nifty Norfolk jacket, a huge orange and black tie, tan shoes, and a soft felt hat pulled over one eye.

Sally Rose was stunned with his stylishness. Involuntarily she smoothed her oxized hair, and patted into place the pasted curl she had acquired during her northern stay. Then, pulling her small close fitting hat a trifle further down over her ears, she too, felt herself a person of fashion.

Interest in her surroundings began to revive and the yearnings of a lonely heart to fade away.

This chance discovery seemed to have possibilities—and Zeke was far away and maybe had another girl by now.

She cast a furtive glance at the approaching vision.

"He mought 'er been a tall feller if so much o' him hadn't been turned up in them yaller shoes," she soliloquized.

The Jigger Man came into full view. On either arm he carried a huge basket piled high with sandwiches, neatly wrapped in oiled paper. A small boy with re-enforcements walked behind him.

"Heah's yo' samwiches, right heah wid de Jigger Man," he called coming nearer, and finally he seated himself on the running board of a nearby car.

Sally Rose could not see very well without turning squarely around, and this she disdained to do. How-

ever it did not interfere with an occasional coquettish glance over her shoulder, and she was near enough to hear him emit a sigh as he wearily seated himself.

"My Lawdy! but I'se tired," she heard him say to himself.

Sally Rose cleared her throat. Mr. Jigger Man followed the sound with his eyes and beheld a vision of color.

"Dis heah sho' am my lucky day!" he exclaimed under his breath, solemnly taking a rabbit's foot from his pocket and raising it to his lips.

Sally Rose caught a fleeting glimpse of the action and posed effectively.

Here, nearby, was that embodiment of northern aristocratic color she had so long dreamed of meeting and only just a few minutes before, she had been almost sad thinking " 'bout dat ole rag-bag Zeke!"

Mr. Jigger Man maintained his apparent indifference and conversed audibly with his small assistant.

"Mister Jackson," asked the boy, "ain't yo' already made a heap o' money to-day?"

The Jigger Man put his hand in his trousers pocket and gave an answering jingle.

"Well, sonny," he answered, "we ain't done so worse, an' dey'll be all starved ter death when dey quits a'howlin' an' yellin' 'bout dat ball, whut looks lik' a bladder blowed up!"

Sally Rose sat entranced listening.

"Did yo' eber play football?" inquired the youthful help.

"Me? Yo' bet yo' life I ain't!" scornfully responded the Jigger Man. "Son," he continued, "whenever yo' heahs dat I'se done dressed myse'f up in knee pants an' a shirt wid no sleeves, an' I gits out in de middle ob a pasture a'runnin' my fool se'f ter death arter a ball, an' eberybody a'pilin' theyselves all on top o' me, an' a'waitin' fur some feller ter blow a whistle 'fore dey moves—den's de time I 'lows fer some friend ter lay me out wid a shot gun!"

His eloquent harangue much impressed both of the listeners.

Sally Rose's nerves tingled to the cadence of the Jigger Man's voice. She had only a partial view of his features, but his stylish apparel had not been unappreciated and now she had listened to words of wisdom. This man of the world, this Jigger Man as he had styled himself, knew all about football and making money, and Zeke—"why Zeke's jes' a swimp peddler an' doan know nuthin' else!"

She laughed aloud.

The Jigger Man, hearing the laugh, rose from his seat and looked toward the lady.

He ventured a few steps nearer.

"Maybe yo'd lik' some samwiches Miss," he began, "de Jigger Man allus has de best."

Sally Rose glanced out of the corner of her eye and fingered her light purse.

"How much is dey, Mr. Jigger?" she inquired.

The Jigger Man gasped.

"Bless de Lawd!" he exclaimed, upsetting, as he spoke, his basket of refreshments.

His hat, which had so well covered his head and brow, fell off. Sally Rose turned squarely around, uttered a scream and sat back on the cushions of the car.

"Zeke!" she said accusingly, "whut yo' mean a'-runnin' 'round heah all dressed up fit ter kill an' callin' yo'self sech a fool name?"

"Sally Rose—Honey," he asked tenderly, "didn't yo' know me?"

" 'Co'se I didn't!" she answered, "I'se a'settin' heah keepin' Miss Evelyn's things while she an' her beau goes ter see de football. I wuz a'thinkin' yo' wuz some swell pusson!" she continued airily.

"Wuz yo' a'makin' eyes at some nigger yo' didn't know—answer me, 'oman!"

The masterful tone had its desired effect.

Sally Rose felt the necessity for her most bewitching smile. Zeke melted.

"Yo' wuz in my mind, nigger-boy, an' I reckon I knowed yo' all de time, even ef yo' wuz all gotten up!" she coyly rejoined, "but how comes yo' heah?"

"Well, Honey, I couldn' stay home no more widout yo', an' de swimp season wuz po', so Mister Johnny Cunningham wuz a'comin' heah ter school, an 'said he'd let me cum 'long ter hunt fer work. De man whut runs dis business done tuck a misery in his back, an' he got me ter tak' his place an' dis heah's his boy a'helpin'."

Zeke's soul was in his eyes.

"Yo' won't go away widout me, Pearl o' Great Price?" he begged.

"No, Zeke—I'se gwine stay heah 'til yo' ready ter go too," answered Sally Rose, her cheeks very warm.

"I reckon we kin find a preacher heah, same as ter home," remarked Zeke, climbing into the car beside his sweetheart.

As Sally Rose's bright orange waist nestled against Zeke's black coat, a wild cheer went up from the crowd.

"Wuz dey cheerin' us, Zeke?" asked Sally Rose, withdrawing herself somewhat from Zeke's embrace.

"I doan keer ef dey wuz, honey-chile," responded Zeke.

The orange waist was again embraced by the black coat sleeve.

The thumping of two hearts applauded the victory for the Orange and Black!

ASK DARWIN!

"SNOOKS?" (no answer). "Snooks?" (no answer). "Heah, yo', Snooks, cum bring me a bucket o' water," called an authoritative voice from the kitchen door.

Snooks reluctantly relinquished the end of a string on which a June-bug was buzzing.

"Now yo's dun it, Ma!" he complained disgustedly.

"Dun whut?" asked his mother.

"Made me let dis heah June-bug git away when I'se been two days a'ketchin' 'im!" whined the little negro.

"Doan yo' giv' me any back talk, chile! Yo' run 'long like a good boy an' hep' me ef yo' wants ter go ter dat picnic dis eb'nin'."

Thus cajoled Snooks tolerantly accepted the bucket from his mother, altho' he cast a longing look after the June-bug as it took its deliberate departure through the long grass.

The bucket of water having been duly deposited on the kitchen table, Snooks then fell to work helping in other ways. Very industriously he carried in the wood for the kitchen stove, carefully swept the floor and, after mid-day dinner, helped to wash the dishes

in order that they might get off to the picnic in time.

Many of these jobs might have appeared heavy ones to another child of eight, but to Snooks, who had felt his responsibility as his mother's chief aid ever since the death of his father, the tasks were only an evidence of his importance.

A very happy little pickaninny was told by his mammy, to "cum on an' dress."

Finally, made resplendent in a clean gingham suit and sailor's cap, Snooks wended a jaunty way with his mother toward the picnic grounds.

In his pocket, the small boy carried his money which from time to time he jingled to be sure it was there. With pride he handled his wealth, for had he not earned it by clogging for the white folks in the house where his mammy worked? Two whole nickels seemed a fortune to this young person and he wondered how many things he might do with so much money.

The crowd was already assembling when he and his mammy arrived, and the band was gayly playing. Every fibre of the small boy's being responded to the rhythm of the tune.

"Quit yo' dancin' an' cavortin' heah, chile!" remonstrated his mother, holding his hand tightly.

"De ban' jes' nacherly makes my laigs shake, Ma!" replied Snooks.

"Well, yo' never kin git nowheres les' yo' laigs move on, 'stead o' jumpin' up an' down in de same spot!" his mother answered, with a broad smile, which was arrested when Snooks clutched wildly at her arm.

"Oh, look Ma!" and he pointed his finger excitedly, "thar's a show yonder!"

There, at one side, flapping in the breeze, was a large canvas on which were some wonderful paintings.

Above the work of art was printed: "Mr. Johnny Samuels will give an exhibit of his trained monkeys and other animals, at four o'clock sharp. Ten cents admission, children under twelve years, five cents."

Snooks' mother looked at the picture of the monkeys and spelled out the printing. She then re-read the words aloud to Snooks.

"Kin *us* go, Ma?" eagerly queried the boy.

She smiled, and the sympathetic kindliness of her face was brought out by her even white teeth and brown dimples.

"Yo' is a man o' wealth, sonny," she rejoined, "it'll take only one o' yo' nickels ter let yo' in."

Snooks grinned—but suddenly puckered his brow in perplexity.

"How's yo' gwine in, Ma?" he inquired anxiously.

"Oh, I reckon I'se got ten cents 'round somewheres."

At these reassuring words, Snooks' horizon cleared, but some time must be disposed of before the show would begin.

The picnickers whiled away this period of waiting by a treat of lemonade and a ride on the merry-go-round but despite these diversions, time dragged heavily for Snooks.

At last, however, the welcome sound of a tat-too on a tin pan attracted the attention of the crowd. The loudly raised voice of a man, none other than Mr. Johnny Samuels himself, was heard.

"Step this way to see the monkeys perform—Come one, come all! Come see your monkey brothers do all the things you do yourself!"

Darwin would have smiled had he been there.

The boisterous crowd roared with appreciative laughter; Snooks' eyes grew big and round.

"Ain't dey *monkeys,* Ma?" he breathlessly inquired.

"Yes, honey," she answered.

"Whut he mean by 'brudders', den?" the persistant Snooks pursued.

"Doan kep' talkin', sonny," she silenced him, "yo' can't 'spect ter know everything, but kep' yo' mouth shet an' listen ter whut Mr. Johnny's gwine ter say."

The crowd, in the meanwhile, in their endeavor to get seats, began pushing toward the stage. Snooks

and his mother were fortunate enough to secure front chairs where they could watch every little movement of the performers.

The small boy's heart beat with excitement as Mr. Johnny Samuels, in professional grandeur came forward on the platform and made several pompous bows to the applauding audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen," began the spieler, "I have here before you the most trained animals what are known to mankind. They are so like human beings that many mighty smart people think we were all once monkeys."

Mr. Johnny viewed the crowd of childishly interested faces and an expression illumined his countenance as tho' he were withholding from them an expected sugar plum.

Then, clearing his throat, he continued, "I will now show you two of the most wonderful trained monkeys that ever existed."

He turned toward a door at the rear of the stage and opened it with great ceremony.

"Admiral Dewey—Aguinaldo," he called. Out hopped two small monkeys.

The crowd gaped in admiration at the gaudy costumes worn by Admiral Dewey and Aguinaldo, but burst into hilarious laughter at the sight of the serious little faces.

"*These,* ladies and gentlemen," continued Mr. Johnny with another bow, "you will see by their looks and actions, are like you all here, your brothers, if you please."

"I ain't got no brudders, Ma," remarked Snooks in a low voice.

"Well, yo' kin hav' one o' dese heah little monkeys fur a brudder," she teased in a whisper. Snooks looked dubious.

In the meantime, at a word of command from Mr. Johnny, the two small monkeys came to the front of the stage and stood, blinking their bright little eyes at the audience.

Snooks sat up very straight and looked them right in the eye, clutching his mother's hand tightly the while.

The show began. A diminutive ladder was placed against a small table.

"Now Admiral Dewey," began Mr. Johnny, "get busy and climb that ladder," and Admiral Dewey forthwith began to climb, but just as he was near the top, Aguinaldo, who until now had sat on his haunches munching a peanut, turned his head suddenly and glanced toward his companion. Then quick as a wink, he darted toward Admiral Dewey and jerked the ladder from beneath him.

The audience roared with amusement.

The Admiral picked himself up, and with a most resigned air, replaced the ladder and began to climb again.

Aguinaldo kept perfectly still until the Admiral had nearly reached the table again, then with a spring, he repeated the upsetting of the ladder.

"Aw, that ain't fair!" called Snooks aloud.

The crestfallen Admiral looked at the speaker gratefully but continued his daily routine by turning toward a pile of small stones, conveniently placed nearby and with these missiles he began to pelt Aguinaldo who had been tormenting him.

Snooks stood up excitedly.

"That's right! rock him, maybe he'll behave hisse'f!" he cried out.

"Keep still, Snooks!" cautioned his mother, and the child thus admonished became silent.

The monkeys finished their performance and were allowed to retire through the rear door.

The subsequent acts—trained rabbits and accomplished dogs, failed to interest Snooks. These actors were not his "brudders", Mr. Johnny had specified the monkeys, and Snooks' loyalty remained unwavering. His small mind was full of conjectures concerning these little creatures so nearly human.

He wondered where they slept and what they ate?

Then—inspiration! He would investigate.

A sly glance at his mother revealed her, engaged in exchanging confidences with some friends on the opposite side from him.

Snooks scented a chance for escape. Stealthily the little chap left his seat and then as cautiously crept around the corner of the stage behind the long curtain.

There, to his wonderment, he made the discovery that the stage was on wheels, and further, that it formed a part of a large automobile truck.

The youthful detective bravely peered into the recesses of this room and in one corner he discovered a mattress. It was soft, the air was balmy and conducive to sleep, so the child put his little kinky head on the inviting mattress and was soon drifting into the land of fancy.

There, everybody had small, serious faces, wore funny, diminutive coats and queer little red caps. Nobody seemed to have anything to do except to sway from the limbs of trees by their long, furry tails. Snooks experienced a distinct swaying himself and wondered if he, too, were hanging by a tail, like his "brother" monkeys.

At that moment, he felt himself fall from a tree—and lo! he was wide awake.

It was very dark, not even a ray of light coming through the heavy curtain.

A great fear began to creep over the child. Bravely he arose and peered out. A white line stretched out behind the room; Snooks knew that that line was the road, and that he was in a moving truck which was taking him further and further away from home. In his fright, the small boy sank back onto the mattress, and panic seized him as a wee, cold nose touched his face.

The next thing he realized, however, was a little warm body cuddling close to him, around which Snooks' nervous arms closed and boy and monkey fell asleep in close embrace.

The following morning, when Mr. Johnny Samuels, having arrived in the next village, began opening up his van for a show, he had a great surprise. There, slumbering within his van between Admiral Dewey and Aguinaldo, lay a small negro child.

"For the love o' Mike!" he exclaimed, "they're 'brothers' all right!" But even in his merriment, the kindly heart of Mr. Johnny Samuels was keenly touched and when Snooks suddenly awakened, the man reassuringly patted him on the head.

"That's all right, sonny," he said, "I'll get you back to your mammy, soon's we've had some corn bread and 'lasses for our breakfast."

No grief could withstand such a feast and it was a smiling little boy who was transferred from the cus-

tody of Mr. Samuels to kindly passersby who offered to take the little chap in their car, back to his mammy.

Richer in experience and wealth he was gathered into his mother's arms, when he reached home.

"Whut yo' mean, chile, runnin' off wid strangers an' skeerin' me 'most ter death?" she remonstrated.

"I didn't run off, Ma, I jes' drap ter sleep in de truck an' it move out an' tuck me!

"Mr. Johnny wuz mighty good ter me, he gin me a quarter—an' den, why fer yo' skeered? I wuz wid my Brudders, wuzzant I?"

Ask Darwin!

LUCK IN RELIGION

"HEAH, yo' Refus," drawled the voice of Henry Clay Lewis, as he arose lazily from his soap box seat.

The yellow dog, thus addressed, wagged his tail and blinked at his master.

"Whut yo' all time right under my feet fur? How yo' 'specks me ter ever git anywheres?"

Refus made no reply other than to tuck his mangy tail between his legs, as at a respectful distance he sneaked along at the heels of his master, who had started down the road.

The energy, however, which had impelled Henry Clay's movements, did not long endure, and soon he began to look about for a new resting place.

"Dis heah weather suttenly do take de sperit outen a man," yawned the owner of Refus, as he surrendered to the inviting shade of a high plank fence.

Taking off his worn leather jacket and battered hat, stretching out his legs, he began an idle meditation.

Refus, ever a willing and faithful imitator, noted the relaxed position, and was soon stretched at full length, fast asleep.

Only the flip of an ear at an occasional fly, betokened him a light sleeper. Sleep, however, was not so easy for his master.

Life for Henry Clay had become somewhat complex.

"Ain't nobody keers nuthin' 'bout me, 'ceptin' dis heah ole yaller dawg," he mused, as he affectionately stroked Refus' head.

"It do keep a fellar plannin' how's he gwine git 'nuff ter eat an' somewher' ter res' hisse'f at night. In de winter it's too cold ter work an' in de summer it's too hot. Thar oughter be some way ter manage 'sides allus workin'—but a fellar gits hongry jes' de same, an' sleepy too," he added. This last was made evident by the drowsiness which soon overpowered the man as well as the dog.

Sleep and anticipated pleasant dreams were presently rudely shattered by a "bang!" against the board fence.

Henry Clay raised his crooked arm in alarm, fearing he had been shot, but discovered that the trickling down his face was nothing of a more serious nature than whitewash.

A smile spread over his dusky countenance and he bestowed his relieved attention upon a conversation being carried on, on the other side of the high board fence.

"It sho' am a powerful revival we all's a'havin' at our Chu'ch," said a deep bass voice to the accompaniment of a swishing brush.

"How many's jined?" asked a high tenor, whose owner stopped to dip from the bucket of whitewash.

"Oh, I reckon maybe fifty," the first speaker replied. "I tells yo', Pete, dat parson suttenly hands it to de sinners right! De mourners' bench am plumb full ebery night."

Pete was duly impressed. "Has dey tuck in much money?" he inquired.

"Money? Why, nigger, dat plate's piled up an' a'runnin' ober ebery night, an' dey say dere's no tellin' whar it cums from an' whar it goes to."

Pete emitted a low whistle, and Henry Clay lent an even more attentive ear.

"Well, money seems ter cum mighty easy fur some folks," he heard, "but it sho' am powerful hard ter git my fingers on any." A sympathetic emotion filled the breast of Henry Clay. A bit checkered had been his own career, what with working, a very little, and begging, a bit more, he had managed to live and there had been occasions when his fingers were perhaps a trifle "light", for it is to be feared that Henry Clay's left hand had, at times, known what his right hand had been doing.

A desire now awakened within his breast to see

with his own eyes this preacher-man, who was able to acquire so much money, with such apparent ease. He had never dreamed but that it was for the preacher's personal use.

"I'd lik' ter see that thar revival," he mused, "but dey wouldn't let no ole ragbag lik' me in de meetin' house!"

It was then that a bright idea inspired him. "I'll axt Mis' Miller fur some clothes; thar wuz a mighty plenty hangin' on de line in her back ya'd, when I cut de grass las' week."

The idea gave new energy to the erstwhile sleeper, and dog at heel, he was soon ambling toward the Miller home on Elm Street.

"Look heah, Refus," he admonished as they walked, "yo' got ter let Mis' Miller's cat alone, ef she's gwine giv' me somethin'. Reckon I'll jes' tie yo' outside while I goes in." This threat was duly executed at the Miller gate and, hat in hand, Henry Clay knocked at the kitchen door.

"Whut yo' want heah, nigger?" scornfully inquired the dark-hued empress of the kitchen.

"Doan want nuthin' o' yo', yo' upperty smartelec. My business is wid Mis' Miller," he answered contemptuously.

"Keep yo' sass ter yo'se'f man, or I won't tell her yo's heah!" announced the woman.

The mistress of the house, happening to hear the disturbance, appeared at the pantry door and looked into the kitchen. Henry Clay gave a triumphant glance at the cook and made his wants known. The appeal had its desired effect, and Mrs. Miller soon reappeared with an armful of discarded clothing.

"Can you wear these, Henry?" she asked, handing to him some old trousers, a much out-of-date Prince Albert coat and a venerable stove pipe hat.

"Yassum, I suttinly kin, an' thank yo' mam!" replied the negro, rapturously.

In the meanwhile, Refus had grown impatient of his enforced detention at the gate, and now the group at the kitchen door was horrified to see the dog dashing into their midst, close after Mrs. Miller's pet cat.

"Oh, that awful creature! Don't let him touch my cat!" screamed the mistress of the house.

Henry Clay made a dive for the offending Refus, another for his newly acquired wardrobe and effected a quick exit. Down to his little shanty on the edge of town he hastened.

A complete change of raiment and Henry Clay stepped out into the gathering dusk a new man.

Refus, at first, regarded his master with suspicion, but after much sniffing was satisfied.

In his stylish finery, Henry Clay had taken on a

new lease of life—he was even a little condescending to his faithful companion.

"Now, look heah dawg," he said as he affectionately pulled one of Refus' ears, "yo' can't go to no 'tracted meetin' 'cause dawgs doan need no preachifyin'. Yo' jes' stay ter home an' mebbe I'll bring yo' a little present!" he finished.

Refus was accordingly fastened in the little shanty and an old bone, which had been previously acquired from a garbage can, was given him. Then the namesake of the great statesman started off to seek religion.

"Who's dat nigger all dressed ter death?" inquired one of his acquaintances, as the latter passed down the village street.

"I dunno, he resembles Henry Clay Lewis, but 'tain't, 'cause he allus looks lik' a ole bunch o' rags an' dat yaller dawg o' his'n is allus a'followin' 'im."

Henry Clay indulged in a furtive smile as he overheard these remarks, but felt secure in his incognito, as he proceeded toward the Macedonian Baptist Church, where the revival was in full swing.

The chanting sound of the preacher's voice greeted him through the open window.

"We's a trabellin' a weary road, my brudders! De wagon am full, an' some o' us can't hold on," he wailed. "We keep a'drappin' off an' ole Mister

Debbil's a runnin' 'long close by an' he ketch de foot whut's a'hangin' ober de side, an' it's mighty easy fur de Ole Boy ter yank some sinner off."

The audience rocked in unison and numerous "Amens" and "Yes, Brudder!" came from their overwrought emotions.

Wiping his sweating brow with his large white handkerchief, the divine continued:

"Better git right in de gospel wagon, whar yo' can't fall off. Come 'long on de mourners' bench an' 'fess yo' sins, so ole Mister Satan can't lay his han' on yo' an' pull yo' down ter fire an' brimstone!"

A shudder passed over the assemblage as this fearsome probability was pictured for them.

They arose and pushed each other aside in their eagerness to reach the seat of repentance, directly in front of the table whereon lay the over-brimming collection plate.

At this psychological moment, when the repentants were hysterically making their way forward, arrived Henry Clay Lewis. A keen glance through the open door of the church revealed to him the mourners' bench within easy reach of the bountiful offerings.

His enthusiasm gave speed to his usually slow feet. Religion overpowered him.

Pushing to right and left the sinners on either side

of him, he made his determined way toward the repentant bench. He was greeted by the choir and congregation as they sang, "Get on de Gospel Wagon."

Henry Clay's religious eyes never wandered from that well-filled plate. He saw a short cut to affluence could he but edge near enough for his light fingers to wander.

The emotional crowd swayed and sang. The preacher left his pulpit and worked among the penitents.

"Come on brudder, come on sister," he admonished them, "go down on yo' knees an' axt forgiveness fer yo' sins, an' de Lord hab mercy on yo' wicked souls!"

Obedient to the suggestion, the sinners knelt, Henry Clay amongst them. This last named gentleman, however, was most particular about the location of his sinful body, while his soul was overpowered by religious fervor. Within a few inches of the quarters and dimes and piled up dollar bills knelt that devotee.

All unknown to the sinners and saved, there now crept into their midst an intruder.

The lean bone had exhausted its fascination for Refus and, through a loose plank in the side of the shanty, the dog had gained his freedom and had fol-

lowed his master, even into the sanctified surroundings. Nothing daunted by the aristocratic assemblage, unawed by the ministerial presence, regardless of the many distracting perfumes which permeated the atmosphere, the yellow dog crept beneath the seats until he was close beside his master.

" 'Tain't my sister but it's me, Oh Lord, standin' in de need o' prayer," sang the choir.

"Amen!" responded the united voices of the audience, deep in worship.

"This is the time," thought Henry Clay, "ter he'p merse'f!" and his hand began stealthily to creep toward the collection plate.

At this moment, however, something cold and clammy touched those light fingers.

"Lawd hev' mercy on my soul!" wailed Henry Clay, and his knees shook beneath him.

The succeeding chant of the choir was answered by a blood curdling accompaniment: "Ow—Ow—Ow!" rose the penetrating cry, directly at Henry Clay's side.

The dog was getting religion, too.

In this hysterical moment the howling yelp of Refus was interpreted as supernatural, and a panic ensued. There was a wild scramble of sinners, falling over each other in mad haste to escape damnation.

In the confusion which followed, the reading desk

was knocked over, thereby upsetting the communion table, whereon lay the coveted money plate. The collection scattered in every direction.

"It's de debbil done got us!" howled a hoary-headed son of Ham.

A young yellow girl made an unsuccessful attempt to hurl herself into the arms of Henry Clay, but there was other work for those arms to do.

As the coins and bills rolled on to the floor, Henry Clay made a wide sweep about him, gathering in what he could, and beat a hasty retreat by a side exit.

Refus managed to extricate himself from the melee, and quite unnoticed, emerged from the house of prayer and was soon with his master in the privacy of their own domocile.

Henry Clay carefully bolted his door, lighted his lantern, and then turned toward his faithful ally:

"Yo's a good ole dawg!" he said approvingly, while he patted him on the head, "mebbe I'll buy yo' a sho' 'nough piece o' meat to-morrow," he concluded. Refus wagged his tail and licked his master's hand.

Henry Clay Lewis drew from his pockets his evening collection.

"Three dollars and fifty cents!" he exclaimed ex-

citedly, a dollar more than he had expected to find in the clutch of his light fingers.

"Doan tel' me, Refus dawg," he said musingly, "dat a two dollar bill's bad luck."

Refus wagged his tail understandingly.

"I maintains, ole dawg," he went on, "luck's a thing yo' can find if yo' jes' looks fer it. Yo' can find luck in 'ligion ef yo' knows how ter work it!"

THE MAN IN THE CAR

"TAIN'T no use, suh, dis heah wheel's got ter come plumb off!" A kick at the offending member emphasized Ike's scorn.

"Now, ef it wuz jes' a puncture, suh," the young negro chauffeur continued, " 'twouldn't tak' no time; but dis heah wheel's got somethin' wrong wid its innards."

The President of the Upland Lumber Corporation looked annoyed. "Well, take the blame thing off and make as quick a job of it as you can," he said. "I will not spend another night in one of these country hotels. We must get to the city by dark." Petulantly he chewed on his Corona, and with a nervous hand picked up his newspaper.

Ike lifted the tool kit and began deliberately to remove the front wheel of the Rolls Royce. Taking a final look to see that the car was well jacked up, the chauffeur then proceeded to roll the detached wheel down the street to the nearest garage.

The Man in the Car settled himself for a long wait. Things like this were apt to occur only too frequently on the tail-end of long business trips. No telling where the hands of his watch would point

when that nigger, Ike, would return. That boy was slower than transmission oil in winter.

The impulse that had influenced the President of the Upland Lumber Company to give such a job to the grandson of his old black mammy, was now almost a cause for regret. What if the boy was a graduate of a chauffeurs' school, he was still a negro, and no school on earth could ever teach him to hustle.

Well—there was nothing to do but wait, so the owner of the disabled car settled himself as comfortably as possible, on the cushioned seat, and rolling his cigar from one side of his mouth to the other, devoted himself to reading.

After the passage of nearly half an hour, the much-mussed newspaper was thrown aside, a road book supplanting it, and he immersed himself in the problems of distances and directions.

"This must be the populous town of Slickerway. What a name! Not much that's interesting to either see or hear around these parts," and a derisive smile curled his lips.

Sitting lazily gazing about, the surroundings began gradually to register on his consciousness, and the tiresome Blue Book took its place beside the discarded news sheet. The different groups of negroes who evidently were in the habit of congregating here, began to attract the roving eye of the Man in the Car.

New arrivals were being hailed with, "Howdy," or cordial slaps on the back.

Upon one of these new-comers in particular, the gaze of the Man in the Car was focused. Some trick of memory compelled a second look and aroused his interest.

Yes—it was Old Uncle Ben, his father's house servant, of whom this old negro in the street reminded him! Old Uncle Ben who had taught him, when a little boy, to ride his pony.

"Little Marse," Uncle Ben had called him then.

A tender, almost childish, smile, for a moment, softened the stern expression of the Man's face. Memory had had small opportunity in the Man's busy life and now suddenly the flood-gates burst open, and he was submerged in childhood recollections.

Uncle Ben's wife, Aunt Cassade, had been an almost-mother to the little half-orphaned child and he now remembered the soft cushion of her arm as she had rocked him to sleep in her lap. Strange, that the sunlight of this day, on a street of a little unknown village, should re-awaken thoughts which had so long slumbered.

A peaceful calm began to steal over the usually restless spirit of this busy man.

This was Saturday, and amusedly the Man re-

called how darkies liked to gather in any nearby town on Saturdays.

Uncle Ben and Aunt Cassade had always gone to the village on Saturday evenings, although Aunt Cassade had never failed to return to the plantation in time to hear the prayers of her "lil' honey-boy" and to tuck him into bed.

What had those prayers been? Yes—they began with, "Now I Lay Me," and ended with, "Our Father." Vainly he tried to recall them. He never forgot figures! Could he not compel his mind to remember those simple, childish prayers?

Ah—praying, perhaps, had not been such an integral part of his daily life as figures!

A strange sound precipitated the Man in the Car from the past into the hot, sultry present.

Across the street, the crowd was gathering around a person who was strumming a guitar.

By raising himself a bit, the Man in the Car could see two negroes who were evidently the nucleus of a dusky group.

This twain were beginning to preach, and the droning, chanting voices accompanied music which was furnished by the bony fingers of the black clad preacher.

"Oh, Lord," intoned the preacher as he raised one hand toward his tightly fitting skull-cap, "let not de

sperit ob onrighteousness descend on dis heah people!"

"No—Lord," pleaded his female companion.

The appearance of this female was indeed ludicrous. She wore on the top of her kinky hair a large sailor hat, and wielded automatically a palm leaf fan. With a handkerchief she proceeded to mop her sweaty face, and involuntarily there came to the lips of her white audience in the automobile an amused and derisive smile, which, however, died still-born when he suddenly recognized her expression of fervor and sincerity. From this scare-crow saint, the Man in the Car glanced back to her companion.

A look of the far-off jungle shone from the preacher's fanatical eyes as furtively he viewed the assemblage. He was speaking and the Man listened.

"We'se heah today an' gone to-morrow, an' whar is we all a'gwine?" demanded the accusing voice.

"Lord hab mercy!" wailed the female descendant of the jungle.

The hot sun shone down on the listening negroes, now stilled into awed attention.

The speaker's voice grew louder and more chant-like as he continued: "Thar's sin a'stalkin' an' sin a' walkin', an' sin a'settin' on ebery street corner. De rich an' po'," the preacher went on, "air all alike, entertainin' Satan when de Marster's a'waitin' fur a chair!"

Unheeded were the great beads of perspiration on the exhorter's brow as he shouted, "Git up, sinner, an' let yo' Marster set down! Doan yo' see Him a'waitin' fer yo' to axt Him?"

The Man in the Car sat back on the cushions and looked at his watch.

Ike had already been gone an hour. Would he never come back? Well, there was nothing to do but sit and listen to the harangue of that crazy negro across the street. He was compelled to hear his words and he could not keep his mind from taking in what was said.

Finally, hoarseness overcame the male voice and he was supplanted by the shriller, though no less fervent, harangue of the woman.

"Sisters and Brudders, whar's all de preachers?"

There was no answer, so she continued, "De baker's in de bake shop, de cook's in de cook kitchen, de presser's at de pressin' board, de store man's in his store, all 'tendin' to dere callin'—but whar's de preachers?"

"Amen! Glory be," emphasized her spouse.

Heedless of the interruption the woman shook herself from side to side and mopped her forehead as she proceeded. She raised herself on tip-toes with vehemence, and pointed a condemning finger at the absent offenders.

"I'll tell yo' whar dey is! Dey's a'ridin' around in big lymysine's, a'rarin' back on de cushions, enjoyin' deyselves smokin' big segars, an' dey doan know dat de debbil am a'trailin' 'em! Ole Mister Satan doan keer nothin' 'bout gaseline! He ain't a'feered o' gittin' gassed. All he keers 'bout is a'keepin' de preachers 'way from dere business o' savin' souls, an' carryin' 'em down ter fire an' brimstone!"

The Man in the Car automatically tossed away his offending cigar. He was becoming cynically amused. This discourse would certainly be repeated to some of his fashionable friends of the clergy at some future time. They would be greatly entertained!

The Man's amused thought was interrupted by further words from the lips of the first negro orator, who now took up the thread of the discourse.

"We'se been a'preachin' ter a crowd eberywhar; las' night, dere wuz only two black people in de audience, de res' wuz all white folks. But dat doan make no difference. De Lord ain't no respector o' persons—His word is meant fur dem too!"

He looked out over the crowd, and like a lodestone drew the attention of the white occupant of the car and held his eye.

"When did any o' yo' pray ter God?" he asked violently.

There was silence broken only by a self-conscious shuffling of feet.

"Look yo'selves in de face, an' see ef a look o' shame doan meet yo' gaze! De good Lord's giben yo' eberything yo' needs an' some more dan dey kin use right! Whut," suddenly the preacher's voice demanded passionately, "hev' yo' giv'n' ter Him?"

The Man in the Car moved uneasily. His amusement had left him.

"Search yo' hearts, my hearers," plead the speaker, "an' see whut yo' finds dere, an' turn about an' axt de Lord ter forgive yo'. He ain't never turn no deaf ear when yo' really wants Him!"

During the thrilling prayer which concluded the service, the influential capitalist, the proud egoist in the waiting car, raised his hat and remained uncovered.

Ike, returning at this unprecedented moment of devotion, stopped, spellbound as he viewed his employer. "'Fore de Lord!" he ejaculated, and then proceeded to adjust the repaired wheel.

The owner of the Rolls Royce resumed his important position in the world. Silently he watched the movements of his black chauffeur.

When the wheel was well on, Ike was summoned.

"Come here, Ike," called his employer. "Go over and tell that negro preacher I want to speak to him."

"Yessuh," answered Ike, his face full of wonder.

In a few moments, accompanied by Ike, the exhorter approached, his simple face wearing a look of pleased surprise. He viewed the magnificent car and its owner.

"Whut culd dis rich white man want wid him?"

The Man in the Car held out his hand as the preacher doffed his skull cap, "I want to thank you for your sermon," were the simple words spoken.

The wan face of the negro relaxed. "Thank yo', suh," he responded. "As I said, de Word am fer black an' white, rich an' po' alike!"

Again, the earnest expression transfigured his countenance.

"I expect you find living a little uncertain, in work like yours?" was the next question.

"Oh, it's scrimpy at times, suh, but de Lord ain't never gwine let His servants suffer," replied this preacher of the Word.

The Man in the Car cleared his throat. "Here's something I want to give you, a small payment for something big you've given me today. Get started, Ike," he continued somewhat hoarsely.

"Oh, thank yo', suh!" exclaimed the preacher, clutching a folded bill, which was pressed into his hand.

The sun seemed to suddenly go behind a cloud, for

a mist rose before the eyes of the Man in the Car.

A big puff of dust almost covered the tall lank figure standing in the street, watching the disappearing automobile.

"Whut's yo' got grabbed in yo' hand lik' dat?" demanded the woman, as she approached her spouse.

Together they gazed at a hundred dollar bill!

"Why," answered the negro, as a tear stole down his seared black face, "looks lik' we got some o' de debbil's own materials ter fight him wid! We can certainly travel many a day, an' buy us lots o' food wid dis heah paper! I specs sometimes maybe angels rides in autymobiles. Yo' doan git too po' ter be good, does yo'?"

The woman's hungry eyes looked down the road at the cloud of dust and a silent, thankful prayer was prayed for The Man in The Car.

THE WISE VIRGIN AND THE FOOLISH ONE

"FO' de name o' de Lord!" exclaimed Rastus, "am all de stars done fell, or is dat Star o' Bethlehem Pentecostal Chu'ch on fire!"

Curiosity quickening his footsteps, Rastus drew nearer the sacred edifice. Fortunately, there proved to be no fire, nor were there any fallen stars, but the lights flaming from the windows of the place of worship might easily have fired the imagination of a much less excitable nature than that of Rastus Jones, Esquire.

This gentleman gasped at the view which met his gaze, for indeed the sight was of most extraordinary unusualness.

Instead of the regular pulpit, with its walnut reading desk, surmounted by the big church Bible and the inevitable glass of water, Rastus' surprised eyes noted a stage, a play-acting stage, improvised, 'tis true, but a stage nevertheless, and a stage which boasted a real drop curtain!

"De ole chu'ch members would suttinly turn ober in dere graves, ef dey could see dis," commented the disapproving negro. "Dey must er been purty hard

up ter raise money," and he shook his head dubiously.

And indeed, the financial exigencies of the congregation had been responsible for this metamorphosis which was so startling to Rastus.

The giving of a dramatic entertainment to raise funds had appeared to be the only solution of their troubles, when the committee had met to discuss their affairs.

The suggestion had been made by Margaret Bibbs, "Let's give a real excitin' show!"

"Oh, ef we had a 'citin' play yo'all would jes' git skeered an' holler!" Johnson Cole had answered.

"I think a real, nice, love-makin' story would be nicer," coyly volunteered Victroly Brown. Her comment was accompanied by a wistful glance toward the young minister's study.

"For de name o' goodness!" witheringly exclaimed Omaha Nebraska, "doan let Victroly start any o' dat soft stuff," which remark was probably a straw showing which way the wind blew, for there had existed between these two colored damsels, for some time, an armed truce, which at any preference shown by the good-looking young preacher, the Rev. Josiah Sprouts, was apt to blaze.

The reverend gentleman, at this point of the discussion of the play, appeared on the scene, and his

advent was followed by a respectful hush, which fell over the entire committee meeting.

He, however, looked at neither of the two young women, but impartially addressed himself to Mrs. Hettie Crittenden, the chairman.

The Rev. Josiah Sprouts removed his gold-rimmed nose glasses and wiped them with his handkerchief, which he then majestically returned to his coat-tail pocket.

"I hav' been prognosticatin' over dis heah entertainment fur sometime, Sister Crittenden," he began, an' I hev' come ter de conclusion dat it is in better keepin' wid our Christian work to giv' a play taken from de Holy Book."

"Yo's right, Brother Sprouts," assented Sister Crittenden. "Can yo' designate one we might work on?" she inquired.

The Reverend Josiah gently rocked himself to and fro on his tip-toes. Without apparently noticing the two young women whose artful smiles and glances were trained full upon him, he again addressed himself to Mrs. Crittenden.

"I think," he began, "that a very far-reachin' an' helpful performance of 'The Wise and Foolish Virgins' could be given. Brother Jones says dey hev' tried it out in de Slickerway Chu'ch, an' it proved both helpful an' edifyin'," concluded the divine.

Such an argument could not fail to be conclusive, and as a natural consequence there followed numerous committee meetings and things eventually began to take on the look of a real show.

And a show it proved to be! Omaha Nebraska, in a most aggressive manner, had insisted upon playing the leading role of the Wise Virgins and, as beauty is supposed to accompany a frivolous brain, pretty Victroly Brown led the Foolish ones.

The cast was doomed to be picked and re-picked, but the three principal characters remained unchanged, Omaha Nebraska to lead the Wise and Victroly the Foolish, while the Rev. Josiah Sprouts was to take the part of the Bridegroom. It was to be noticed that as the rehearsals advanced towards the day of performance, relations between some of the leading actors became, to say the least, quite strained.

When Victroly Brown was taken sick from eating fish and drinking buttermilk at a certain supper party, Omaha Nebraska was heard to scornfully remark, "Well, whut does yo' expect o' somebody who ain't fit fur nothin' 'cept ter be a 'Foolish Virgin'?"

Upon hearing the criticism, Victroly had retorted, "Omy has got sech a swell haid since she axt herself ter be a 'Wise Virgin', dat she can't even get on no more hats!"

This pleasantry was duly whispered in the ministerial ear, and the dark skinned Divine felt the necessity of pouring oil on troubled waters.

Accordingly he took Omaha out walking and tactfully talked to her about brotherly love, but when he saw she was misconstruing his remarks as leading to something more personal, he changed his tactics and gave the young lady in question a profound dissertation on Christian charity.

Then, feeling his duty only half accomplished, he invited the prospective Foolish Virgin to drive with him to see a country parishioner, intending incidentally to remonstrate with her on the sinfulness of contention; but, at his first word of reproof, Victroly put her head on his shoulder and started to cry, all of which quite disarmed the Reverend Josiah.

In comforting the repentant girl, he found his arm stealing around her waist and only the approach of another vehicle recalled to his distracted attention the purpose of their drive.

Rather lamely, he then remarked, "Well, yo' will try not ter fuss wid Omaha, won't yo', Vicky?"

The appeal in his voice awakened joy in the breast of his companion and her face dimpled with happiness.

"I'll do jes' whut'll please yo', Brother Sprouts," she acquiesced.

The dignified appellation recalled to his straying consciousness his ministerial position.

Later, the Reverend Josiah experienced a warm, tingling sensation come over him as he reviewed the incident, particularly when recalling that weeping head on his benevolent shoulder.

He retired precipitately into his study and concentrated on reading Paul's advice of keeping the body under subjection, and then fervently prayed to be delivered from the lusts of the flesh.

In the days that followed the momentous decision of producing this play, Mrs. Hettie Crittenden found her hands, which had usually busied themselves with the wash tub, now full of rehearsals. Much ingenuity was necessary in order not only to have the actors attend these rehearsals, but to keep peace when they did arrive.

The actors took their parts most seriously and the Sunday preceding the performance things had reached such a pitch that the Foolish Virgins were about ostracized by the respectable church members.

Even Reverend Sprouts began to feel the existing tension and questioned himself if, maybe, they had not chosen unwisely to attempt to raise money in this manner. He would be greatly relieved when it was all over!

Sister Crittenden worked hard to keep the girls

interested in their bridal costumes, which she was very careful to have equally attractive.

"I'se sho' been a'sweatin' blood" she remarked to her husband, on the evening of the grand performance. "Ef I kin git them fire-eatin' gals thro' dis heah night, widout a hair-pullin', I suttinly will deserve a crown o' glory!" she concluded.

"Nebber mind, honey," consoled her husband, "Yo's done it all right an' it's gwine be a fine show." But despite his reassuring words, Sister Crittenden felt a premonition of something sinister.

At last the long anticipated hour arrived, and the lights that shone from the windows, which had awakened feelings of awe in the breast of Rastus Jones, were now reflecting pleasure on the faces of an expectant audience.

As the clock on the side wall pointed to the hour of eight, a hush stole over the waiting assemblage. At that crucial moment, the heavy drop curtain was pulled solemnly aside, revealing the improvised stage.

The floor was partially covered by a bright red rag-rug, and there had been installed for the occasion, at the rear centre of the stage, an impressive door. This door was later to play an important part in the performance. Through it were to pass the Wise Virgins and the Bridegroom with his attend-

ants. On either side of the opening were piled numerous sofa pillows, upon which the Virgins were to repose while awaiting the arrival of the Bridegroom.

At the sight of the magnificence of the preparations, the audience became even more keyed up with expectancy.

Nor was the suspense confined to them alone, but in the dressing room in the basement below, there existed, also, much smothered excitement among the cast. "Look at Vic a'primpin'!" sneered Omaha. "Anybody would think she wuz gwine git married herse'f, an' she can't even go thru de do' wid de Bridegroom!"

"Yo' won't neither," retorted Victroly, "ef yo' haid keeps a'swellin'!"

"Hush yo' all," interrupted Mrs. Crittenden, "de music is a'startin'," and, obedient to her signal, the impressive march began.

To the accompaniment of the choir's song, "Doan act foolish when de Bridegroom comes," the maidens entered the aisle.

The Foolish Virgins came first, carrying high above their heads small unlighted kerosene lamps. The damsels marched with a care-free tread, and their leader's countenance beamed with joy.

"Vicky looks lik' a bride herse'f," was the pleasing

comment that reached Victroly's ear as she wended her way onward.

In marked contrast to this procession was the approach of the Wise Virgins, with serious faces and solemn dignity.

These provident ones bore not only their lamps, but the fifth one of this group was noticeably swinging a small can of kerosene.

Omaha, their leader, carried herself with the air of one on whom the whole show rested. The others were but adjuncts to form a background for her.

When the music ceased, the ten Virgins, with much display, arranged themselves on the bright-hued cushions and slept. Then followed a few moments of tense silence, which was broken by peal of bells in the distance.

As the last stroke died away, the audience was startled by a great hubbub in the rear of the church.

Snowball Johnson appeared on the threshold, and in a voice more accustumed to calling the cows than talking in church, thundered, "Behold de Bridegroom's a'comin', an' yo' Virgins better git ready ter go ter de weddin' wid 'im!"

There was wild confusion on the stage. Lamps were upset, veils trampled upon and cushions rolled out into the aisle.

The Foolish Virgins began their cry, "Giv' us a

lil' oil fur our lamps," and the Wise ones prudently responded, "Ought'er brung yo' own!"

Victroly imploringly raised her lamp toward Omaha, "Giv' me some o' yo' oil?" she entreated.

"I can't giv' yo' none o' my oil," replied that Wise Virgin, as a look of satisfaction overspread her face, "I'se got ter hav' it ter go in wid the Bridegroom."

During the contentions of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, down the aisle there approached the Bridegroom, the Rev. Josiah Sprouts, and his attendants.

The young negro preacher glanced to neither right nor left but, with measured tread and solemn mien, he neared the Virgins.

The long-tail black coat and grey trousers, the immaculate white tie and corresponding rosebud were in perfect harmony with the part for which he had been cast. One so grandly and properly attired was surely bound for the hymeneal altar. At the auspicious moment that he and his satellites reached the stage, the door at the rear was ceremoniously thrown open and the choir burst into song, chanting the words, "De Wise may enter, but de Foolish hev' no oil. Dey stay outside an' gnash their teeth!"

Pushing aside the Foolish, the Wise Virgins joined the Bridegroom and *en masse* they made their triumphant exit. Then slowly and solemnly the door began to close upon them.

The Foolish Virgins were deeply engrossed with their wailings, save one, who seemed motivated by a certain set purpose.

Stealthily, this particular Virgin was edging as near as possible toward the door where the Reverend Josiah was disappearing. The strain of pretense had quite overcome Victroly, and realizing that the beloved Bridegroom was about to go out of sight, she was unable to longer control herself. Unobserved by the other wailers she rushed through the slowly closing door.

Only the quick eye of the young minister detected her action.

Cleverly did he protect her advent while the procession marched into his sanctum sanctorum, and then he closed the door upon them.

Turning toward the emotional girl, he waited in questioning silence.

"Doan shet me out, Josiah," she moaned, "I doan wan' ter be no Foolish Virgin!"

Josiah gathered the trembling form into his arms, "Yo' sho' ain't gwine ter be no Foolish Virgin," he comforted her. "Yo's gwine ter marry me an' be my lil' wife!"

Her acquiescence was smothered by a tender kiss and he concluded, "We'll let Omaha remain the Wise Virgin, won't we?"

THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

A Romance of the Old South

THE June sunlight, filtering thro' the honeysuckle vines, rested brightly on the gold brown locks of a young girl—almost as tenderly as did the fingers of old Mammy Celie. The buzzing of bees was the only sound, until the ancient servitor raised a disapproving voice:

"Dis heah bob-tail hair suttinly do disappint a body," she remarked, shaking a perplexed white head. "Jes' when yo's all set ter gittin' it breshed, an' lookin' fine, yo's dun, 'fore yo' gits started."

Dorothy's bobbed head shook with mirth.

"Why, Mammy, nobody wears long hair now-a-days except a few old fogies," she protested, nestling more comfortably on the cushions of the broad swinging couch.

"Well, honey chile, yo' ma set a heap o' store by *her* long hair an' wuz mighty proud when it teched her waist," remarked the woman who continued, "whut fer yo' wanter look lik' a boy, anyway? Ain't nuthin' purtier dan nice long curls. Yo' ma uster set herself on dis heah side po'ch an' hev her'n

breshed in de sunshine. It wuz all brown wid de gold shinin' thro' it, but dat sho' wuz a more concentratin' job dan dis heah," and Mammy Celie gave a little pat of affectionate disapproval at the modern innovation.

The young girl made no reply, but patiently she sat while the brushing continued. Not for the world would she have taken away the satisfaction she was able to give to this faithful old retainer by simply allowing her to perform such loving services. Well the girl knew the satisfaction Mammy had in ministering to the child of her "Lil' Missus," and so the soothing hands continued to ply the brush, while a dreamy look stole into Dorothy's eyes as she gazed out into the June sunshine.

Only that morning had there reached her a very disquieting epistle which she now sat meditatively fingering.

Mammy Celie eyed this letter speculatively. Her education did not permit deciphering the postmark, but intuitively she sensed it as being "furreign."

Suddenly Dorothy reached up and took hold of the brown hands above her head—hands of one who had cherished her since her orphaned childhood. Always when puzzled, had she turned to her black mammy for advice.

"Mammy Celie," she began impulsively, "how does anybody know when they're in love?"

The old woman patted the girl patronizingly. She then deliberately came around in front of her, and seated herself upon a low stool. "Now I'se jes' cogitatin' dat dat wuz a'worryin' yo' " and the ancient crone motioned her head toward the letter. "Well honey, dey do say dat lub am a powerful funny thing. When yo's got it yo' doan want it, an' when yo' ain't got it yo's got a misery a'yearnin' fur it," she concluded, shaking her head dubiously.

"But eberybody lubs yo', chile," she continued, "why fer yo' worry dat purty haid 'bout?"

Dorothy drew the pages from the envelope and handed them to her confidant, while a smile played about her teasing lips.

"There it is, Mammy," and she pointed to the closely written pages.

"Yo' 'splain it ter me, honey, I ain't got my right specs," Mammy countered naively, avoiding any reference to her delinquent education. "Now ef dat letter wuz fum Marse John Trumball, I'd know it warn't nuthin' ter worry 'bout, kase everybody knows he jes' can't keep his eyes off o' yo'," and the matchmaker chuckled knowingly.

"But Mammy, he never says anything to me about it," and Dorothy shook her hair from her eyes and lay back and settled herself in the swing.

"I'll tell yo' honey, it ain't de sayinest feller whut

means de mos'," replied the sage. "Now, from de size o' dat letter in yo' han', from dat furriner in New York, I reckon, he dun say a passel, but yo' better watch des heah furrin people. Yo' know, fur-off cows is got mighty long horns," and the old head shook warningly.

Dorothy smiled at the quaint saying and focussed her attention on a floating cloud. The pictured memory of the last few months visioned itself to her as she fingered the importunate missive which now lay in her lap.

At the time of her visit to her Aunt Molly in New York, this young Kentucky belle had gloried in the attentions of Woodruff Gale, the obviously eligible club man, obviously attentive, too, for they had dined and danced together; they had attended operas and theatres in each others company. In quaint, little out of the way places, they had gossipped over cups of jasmine-scented tea and at fashionable late supper clubs they had been noted speculatively. And, everywhere they had been, the eye of Aunt Molly had followed with approval, convincing Dorothy of the man's desirability as a catch.

The attentions of this perfect "catch", however, were not as dazzling to the niece as they might have been. Had she been able to eliminate from her mind the face of her childhood pal, Jack Trumball, Woodruff Gale might have had a fighting chance.

Jack had been Dorothy's companion throughout childhood school days. It was only after her arrival at young womanhood that a feeling of constraint had arisen between them.

The youth had never been a declared lover, but somehow it had been impossible for Dorothy to put him out of her thoughts at the times when Woodruff Gale had appeared most alluring.

This letter, now, with its proposal of marriage from Gale had arrived, and sitting in the sunshine with her old black Mammy at her feet, it was thoughts of Jack which filled the girl's mind.

Mammy Celie brushed away a passing honey bee and gazed solicitiously at the beloved young person in the swing. "Honey-chile," said the anxious voice, "it's a hard road thru life, but tak' it steady an' yo' won't stump yo' toe. Yo' ma, uster wuz upsot 'bout her beaux, many a time, too," she continued reminiscently.

"Won't you tell me about 'uster was,' Mammy?" begged the girl.

A gratified expression flitted across the old woman's face. "Well, chile," began the narrator, "yo' ma—'Lil' Miss' I uster call her—wuz sho' a purty young gal. Her an' her sister, Miss Molly, had all de high falutin' finery dat could be bought fer 'em. Yo' Aunt Molly, whut lives in New York, wuz a

proud-like, strikin', black-eyed young lady an' allus hed her own way 'bout things, but my Lil' Miss," and Mammy paused lovingly on the name, "wuz all gentle-lik' an' didn't never do nuthin' ter hurt nobody. Her an' her sister wuz de two mos' consid'-rate gals ever I see. My Lil' Miss would sing an' play de pianny, an' gether de flowers fer de house an' go see ole Aunt Millie, who couldn't git outer de cabin fer hevin' rheumatiz.

"Miss Molly spent mos' o' her time a'primpin' herself. Nobody ebber realize dat Lil' Miss would grow ter be a young lady, but dey sho' made a mistake!" Mammy chuckled in pleased remembrance.

"One ebenin'," she rambled on, "I wuz a' lightin' de lights in de front hall, an' I heerd Lil' Miss in de parlor jes' a'singin'. I peep thro' de crack o' de do', an' dar she set at dat pianny, wid her grenedeen dress all spread out ober de stool, an' her curls a'-nestlin' down on her neck, all hugged up wid dat comb ole Marse dun broughten her fum de city.

"She wuz a'croonin' soft-lik' ter herse'f an' I jes' stood dar a'list'nin', 'till I plum clean forgits whar I wuz.

"Purty soon, I heerd somethin' back o' me, an' I turn round skeered-lik', 'cause I wuz a'feerd Ole Marse dun kotch me peepin', an' dar stood two young gemmens whut done com ter see Miss Molly.

Dey hel' up dere han's fur me ter keep quiet, an' dey tip-toed to de parlor do' an' look in.

"Lil' Miss wuz a'singin' 'bout, 'B'lieve Me—Young Charms' an' dose gemmens wuz fair spell-bound!"

Mammy paused for effect. "Well, Marse William Scott he ain't say nuthin'!"

Dorothy's eyes began to gleam with pride.

"He jes' stares an' look lik' he dun see a angel.

"When Lil' Miss quits a'singin', Marse Tom Brown he clap his han's an' say, 'Fine! giv' us some more!'

"Well sir, Lil' Miss she look up jes' lik' er skeered bird; den she rare her haid up in de air an' march out o' dat do' past dose two young fellers, an' all she say as she goes, wuz, 'Eaves-droppers!'

"Marse Tom Brown fair nigh busted a'laughin'. 'Some fiery Miss,' he say. "Marse William jes' walk ober ter de window an' look out at de flowers."

A mocking bird, perched in the honeysuckle vine, which screened the porch where Dorothy was sitting, began to warble to his mate in a nearby blossoming cherry tree.

As Dorothy turned her head to listen, the bird stopped singing, and looking from side to side, flew away.

Oblivious of the interruption by the impudent

singer, Mammy Celie continued, "D'reckly, down sailed Mis' Molly, an' I heerd Marse Tom remark, 'Well, Miss Molly, where have yo' been keepin' yo' lil' song bird sister all dis time?'

"Dis heah nigger peeped thru de do' an' see Miss Molly throw back her haid, an' say, 'Has that chile been in here drummin' on the pianny agin?'

" 'Not drummin',' says Marse Tom, 'but singin' an playin' an' doin' it mighty well, too.'

" 'Singin' lik' a nightingale,' says Marse William.

" 'You an' Tom are very polite,' says Miss Molly, airy-like.

" 'Oh, she sang very nicely,' says Marse Tom, 'though of course *I* prefer the sound of your sweet voice—but I fear our friend William, here, is hard hit,' an' Marse Tom slap Marse William on de back, an' he an' Miss Molly laugh.

" 'Bout dat time, I heerd somebody comin' an' I went on 'bout my work, but Sambo, de house-man, say dat when he wuz erlockin' up de house, two or three hours later, he see Marse William Scott er standin' outside in de moonlight, erlookin' at de up-stairs windows thoughtful-lik', an' den he git on his hoss an' ride away fas'.

"Arter dat," the storyteller continued, "it wan't no use fer Miss Molly ter fuss, 'cause all de young gemmens done heerd 'bout Lil' Miss an' dey axt fer her when dey come ter visit.

"Jes' at first, Lil' Miss wuz lik' a skeered baby squirrel, but purty soon she laugh an' dance lik' de res' ob 'em.

"Marse William sho' couldn't keep way fum dat gal! He jes' dar all de time, but Lil' Miss doan pay no 'ticular 'tension ter him, 'cause she 'members him er'eaves-droppin' when she wuz singin'."

Mammy Celie paused and smoothed out her clean white apron. Dorothy raised an interested face toward the old negress. "Go on, Mammy," she begged.

"Well, honey, it wuzzent long 'fore heah come 'long a young gemmen named Marse Underhill, fum way off down in Georgy, cum 'er visitin' in our neighborhood. He jes' hang 'round our house all de time, fum de first day he set his eye on my Lil' Miss. His nigger, Joe, whut he done bring wid him, uster cum ter de cabin an' talk, 'bout how rich his marse wuz an' how fine dey lib, an' how many gran' close he hed. Dat wuz sho' de bragginist nigger ever I see, an' I would'er lik' ter bust his haid wide open, ef it would'er shet his mouth."

Mammy shook her own head vindictively and continued, "Marse Underhill suttinly set up ter Lil' Miss, an' when Marse William Scott wuz 'roun', she'd laugh an' flirt de worstest wid dat stranger. Po' Marse William couldn't keep erway, but he looked mighty mournful-like hangin' 'roun'.

"One ebenin', when de res' of 'em wuz gone, he stay an' I heerd him axt Lil' Miss ter see him a few minutes.

"I wuz a'straightenin' up de parlor, an' I heerd 'em on de seat on de porch, talkin'.

" 'Are you goin' to marry that man from Georgia, Sally Lee?' he says, kind o' stern.

"Lil' Miss turn her haid ter one side an' look at him impudent-like an' say back at him, 'What do you care if I do?'

"De moon cum out o' de clouds an' whar I wuz a'peepin' thro' de shetters, I could see it right on Marse William's face. He look lik' his soul wuz a'-speakin' in his eyes, but he doan say no words.

"He reach ober an' tak' one o' Lil' Miss' white han's, an' she jerk it 'way an' jump up an' run into de house an' up ter her own room an' leave dat po' young man dere erlookin' at de do' she done went thru.

"He know 'twan't no use waitin' fer her ter cum back, so he went home.

"When I went up to Lil' Miss' room ter put out de lights, she wuz erlayin' thar makin' out lik' she wuz sleepin', but when I tip-toed out, I wuz sho' she wuzzent fur I heerd her a'cryin' ter herse'f.

"Nex' day, she hev' a headache, but when Miss Molly axt her ter drive ter town wid her, she lowed

as how she would. She ain't let nobody know her worryment."

The loyal old retainer pressed her withered lips together emphatically.

"Was that the time they had the runaway, Mammy?" asked Dorothy with renewed interest.

"It sho' wuz, honey, an' it lik' ter been de end o' Lil' Miss!"

"Tell me, Mammy Celie," begged Dorothy.

"Well, dis am de r'al truth ob it." The story teller clasped her hands together and, gently rocking herself to and fro, began:

"Yo' see, Miss Molly thought she wuz so smart, she could drive anything, an' when Adam axt 'em ef he wuz ter tak' 'em ter town dat day, dat hard-haided gal 'low she doan need 'im, she could handle dem reins herse'f, she said.

"Adam said 'yassum,' but he told me dat dat bay mare wan't safe fur no 'oman ter drive.

"It wuz a purty day an' Miss Molly 'low as how she gwine ter come home by de ribber road whut goes 'round de cliffs.

"Lil' Miss doan keer, but she caution Miss Molly 'bout dat high-steppin' bay mare; Miss Molly come back at her an' say ef Lil' Miss am a'feered she could come out from town wid de stage driver."

Mammy paused for breath. "My Lil' Miss ain't

let nobody think she's a'skeered, so she go wid Miss Molly.

"Arter our young ladies finished dere galavantin' in town, dey started back home, and when dey reach dat hair-pin bend on dat cliff road, who should dey meet right dar on de turn 'cept ole Mr. Boggs in his jersey wagon. De curtains wuz a'flappin', an' de harness a'rattlin', an' dat fool bay Miss Molly wuz a'drivin' thought de debil hed her fur sho'. She took one wild look, an' rared her haid up in de air, an' when dat ole rattle trap passed 'em, she jumped off de side o' de road an' turned dem two gals down dat cliff!"

Mammy raised her eyes and hands in awful remembrance and Dorothy shivered.

"Lil' Miss say dey go down, down hittin' a tree an' den some rocks, an' den dat light phaeton turn right ober an' she an' Miss Molly hit somethin' that caught dere clothes an' dar dey hung.

"But de phaeton an' dat foolish ole bay mare go right down ter de bottom wid a lot o' rocks an' kill deyselves!" continued the narrator triumphantly.

" 'Bout dat time," she began anew, " 'Long come Marse Underhill on hossback lookin' 'round fer our blue grass whut he know don' grow on no cliffs. When he comes ter dat hair-pin turn, he mos' runs into Marse William Scott in his buggy. As dey wuz

a'gittin' out ob each others way, dey both saw a flowered hat covered wid dust layin' in de road, an' bofe ob 'em jumped ter git it. Lil' Miss had worn it de day before an' dey knowed it wuz her'n.

"Marse William seed more dan de hat. He seed a piece o' Lil' Miss' dress whut cotched on a post whar dat bay mare dun busted thro' de fence when dey pitched ober dat cliff. While Marse Underhill stops ter pick up some bundles at de side o' de road, Marse William runs to de cliff an' looks ober.

" 'My God!' he hollers.

" 'Whut yo' see?' asks Marse Underhill.

" 'Look!' says Marse William, already startin' to clim' down. Way off he cotched sight o' Lil' Miss a'hangin' ter a tree, an' he call 'Sally Lee?' an' she jes' wave her han' feeble like.

"Marse Underhill run to de edge an' look ober. 'Man, yo' can't go down dere! It's suzicide,' he calls to Marse William, fum whar he wuz safe on de road. Marse William ain't pay no mind. He jes' kep' on a'goin' an' when he reach Lil' Miss, he grab hold o' her an' kiss her.

"Lil' Miss say, 'Take Molly up, I kin hold on a lil' longer,' but Marse William never let go o' her, an' he say, 'Hold on ter me, darlin'!' He take Lil' Miss' sash whut done come loose an' tied her ter him, an' den ketchin' Miss Molly, who co'se done fainted, by de waist, he started up dat cliff.

"Well, honey, Lil' Miss say dat young man clum up dem rocks by piecemeals, an' my brave young lady he'p all she could, ketchin' on ter branches an' things 'til he got 'em mos' on top. Den he raise Miss Molly up ter de road, an' Marse Underhill pull her up ter safety."

The old woman paused a moment, then, lifting her head proudly she continued, "Den Marse William lif' his own lil' honey up lik' a lil' baby, but she never did tell me whut he say ter her!"

Mammy drew a long breath and Dorothy's lips parted.

"Jes' when he had all untied dat sash an' finished puttin' her ober de edge, an' started ter climb ober hisse'f, law's a masey! ef de ground ain't giv' way an' down he went, down dat steep place.

"He sho' would'er bust hisse'f, ef he hadn't landed square on top o' dat fat bay mare at de bottom!"

"But, they saved him," said Dorothy, soothing the old woman, who was panting with emotion.

"Yes, honey, dey did, but 'twasn't due ter Marse Underhill, 'cause he wuz a'kneelin' side o' Miss Molly, holdin' her hand. When Lil' Miss see dis, she holler fer he'p an' a overseer man comin' up de pike, heerd her an' he clum down an' bring Marse William up by de cow path. Marse William wuz mighty shuck up, but he wuz so glad 'bout Lil' Miss dat he done forgot his own hurts!

"Marse Underhill he'p dem into de buggy, 'cause Miss Molly done come to by dat time.

"Lil' Miss ain't pay no 'tention ter Marse Underhill 'cause she done heerd him when he tel' Marse William not ter come down dat cliff! Arter dat," concluded the story teller, "eberythin' wuz a'hangin' high fur Marse William, an' 'twant long 'fore he an' yo' ma wuz married—but," she added, "I never did know when he axt her!"

"Well, I reckon he *did,* Mammy, 'cause here *I* am!" laughed Dorothy.

The old negress rose slowly to her feet. Automatically she picked up the comb and brush from the seat, and throwing the towel over her arm, started into the house. The old gossip paused at the door, however, as the sound of a familiar whistle reached her ears.

Jack Trumball was at the gate.

Dorothy's eye fell on the letter in her lap. Then, in her haste to conceal it, the loose sheets fluttered to the floor.

"Looks like some kind of a celebration," exclaimed Jack, springing forward to gather up the scattered pages.

Quite unintentionally, his eye scanned some of the written words. From his stooping, he glanced up into the scarlet face above him.

He arose and handed the girl the letter, holding her eyes with his the while. A bit roughly he then grasped Dorothy's arms and stood over her.

"Are you going to marry that New York fellow?" he demanded.

A mischievous look stole into the girl's eyes. Could the shades of the past be hovering near?

"What do *you* care if I do?" she parried.

The young chap turned and gathered her tenderly in his arms. No romantic moon shone down on these lovers. No restraining chivalry tied the tongue of this modern suiter. In the full glare of day, he declared himself in no uncertain language.

"I care so much, little sweetheart," he answered, "that I'm going to marry you myself."

Mr. Squirrel, sitting upright on the porch banister, favored them with a fleeting glance, then scampered away to gossip about them to his mate.

Dorothy nestled her bobbed head a bit closer on the shoulder of the rough sports-coat.

"But you have never asked me," she taunted.

Jack gazed at her fiercely a moment, then crushing her in his arms, exclaimed, "Well, you knew, all the time! I had to wait to ask you until I had something really to offer you. My book has been sold for a movie, and we can take our honeymoon to Hollywood—unless I am too late," he added, touching the tell-tale letter in her hand.

This accusing missive from Woodruff Gale, Dorothy now tore into bits, and scattered them to the winds.

"You are never too late, Johnny," was all she said.

Mammy Celie, on the other side of the half shut door, the squirrel peering from the branches above, and the mocking bird in the honeysuckle vine, watched sympathetically the kiss that followed.

They all knew what the couple there were saying to each other, standing silent in each others arms, for love is the universal language.

THE UNCERTAIN DEAD

"I'SE mighty sorry ter leave yo', Miss Rita," remarked Isaiah, solemnly, "but, when yo' feels a call and feels it strong, 'tain't no use ter sidestep. De Ole Marster jes' won't let yo' 'lone, n'ome, He won't."

Miss Rita continued to arrange the bowl of roses, and Isaiah went on musingly, " 'Tain't dat I doan lik' ter work fer yo', but pears lik' eber't'ing pints to my callin'."

The negro smiled a serious, melancholy smile and continued, "Maybe yo' ain't pay no 'tention ter how I been a'settin' yo' at de table, lately, facin' de east?"

"Well," answered his mistress, "I do recall that you have changed my seat recently, but I thought that you had noticed that I enjoy looking at the morning sun."

"Yassum," answered the respectful servant, "I knows dat, but besides, dat's jes' one ob de things I does ter keep in practice fur de callin' I'se feelin' so strong."

Miss Rita lifted her eyebrows inquiringly. "Your calling?" she said.

"Yassum," replied the man, "yo' see, we allus

buries people facin' de east, so I jes' nacherly had ter pint yo' dat way."

Isaiah paused impressively and then, disregarding Miss Rita's involuntary shiver, he continued calmly, shaking his head, "N'ome, 'tain't no use o' me butlin' when de Lord's done called me ter bury His people, 'stead o' feedin' 'em!"

Miss Rita shivered again; "Well, Isaiah," she said, "if you really feel a strong call, I agree with you that it is much wiser to follow this new urge, and I sincerely wish you the best of luck."

"Not meanin' ter contradict yo', mam," replied Isaiah uneasily, "but 'tain't zactly 'good luck' business, dat is," he smiled broadly, "ter de feller which causes it."

No answer, and the prospective undertaker went on talking, "But a fine funeral sho' am a satisfaction!"

He backed out of the room deferentially and Miss Rita suppressed a grim smile as she continued with her task.

In the butler's pantry, as Isaiah carefully wiped the silver and glassware—for he certainly could not leave until his day's duties were complete—he soliloquized concerning this new calling to which he was about to consecrate his future, "Ef de Lord 'pints somebody ter bring folks into de world," he mused,

his bright eyes shining piercingly from his round, fat, and usually jovial face, "an' somebody ter he'p 'em while dey's a'passin' thru dis heah vale o' tears, why, ain't He done specify others ter he'p 'em out o' de world?"

Isaiah nodded his approval of his decision, for he felt that he was indeed fitted for this job. A deep and sincere love for funeral display had perhaps, partly influenced him in his choice of vocation, but there was within him a deep conviction of ultimate success. Also Isaiah had a strong leaning toward the flesh pots and his keen insight into the monetary consideration had convinced him that there was more money in the funeral business than the amount used to weight down a dead man's eyes. When finally he completed his domestic obligations, he collected his wages and then a bit regretfully, bade Miss Rita farewell.

"Ef yo' needs me any time," was his parting assurance, "jes' lemme know, 'cause my business ain't no hurryin' business, an' a odd job allus he'ps along de treasury."

Miss Rita secretly hoped that she would never be in such dire need as to be obliged to recall Isaiah, good servant that he had been, for it is a far cry from funerals to salads.

Then, leaving the house where he had served for

several years, the gentleman with a call betook himself, somewhat hastily, to a certain side street and into the second-hand clothing store of Mr. Abraham Cohen.

"What can I do for you to-day, Isaiah?" inquired that artful salesman.

"I needs some black clothes, Mr. Cohen," explained Isaiah seriously.

"Are you going to a funeral?" asked the solicitous storekeeper.

"Not yet," suavely answered the customer, "but I 'spects to, soon, leastways I hopes to."

Mr. Cohen smiled, but the sale of his wares was uppermost in his mind, so he made no comment, but turned to a rack of second-hand garments.

"Here's a nice pair of black pants and a long-tail coat to go with 'em," he announced, stroking the articles tenderly.

"How much is dey?" anxiously inquired the negro.

"If you pay cash, thirty-five dollars, but five dollars a week for nine weeks, if you gets 'em on time," answered the Jew.

Isaiah scratched his head. Five dollars a week seemed very cheap—and—he did not have the thirty-five in cash.

He had already acquired quite a debt when he had

taken over Bob Harris' undertaking business, and it would require several months of prosperous business to pay that off. Still, a man in his profession must be properly dressed, so he decided on the time payment plan, and the bargain was closed.

His optimistic disposition assured him that it would all come out right, for there was much sickness of various kinds in town, he reasoned, and none of the white undertakers took any colored clients.

Taking his purchase under his arm, he betook himself to his rooms above the undertaking establishment where he was to live.

In the weeks that followed, all went well. There were several big funerals that brought in good cash returns and the new undertaker's obligations were consequently met promptly as they came due.

One of Isaiah's funerals had especially attracted widespread attention. Brother Caleb Johnson, a divine of much renown, had died, and his congregation wishing to do him great honor had decided to keep the sainted brother until delegations from all the surrounding towns could arrive to mourn with them.

The Reverend gentleman was of such portly dimensions that everything had to be of extra size, and consequently there had been quite a profit for the man who furnished the equipment. Especially

had there been much excitement in the community when it was found necessary, in order to await the great funeral day, to pack the body in ice, and an entire wagon load of it was needed.

Isaiah considered that this was the most profitable affair of the first few months of his work. There had been much display and consequently a large amount of money spent, and the provident negro had gathered in his share. Then came a long period of slack business and Mr. Cohen was still to be paid.

Each day, Isaiah eagerly scanned the newspapers to see if any trade was in sight, but a persistant, fatal wave of health had come over the people.

"Not dat I likes ter see folks in trouble," he soliloquized, "but can't nobody miss it always, an' when it do come, I jes' as well be on han'."

Each day he dusted his stock to keep it in readiness, and then betook himself to a chair beside the door and waited expectantly.

Mr. Cohen might be persuaded to give him a little more time, but there wasn't much chance.

One day, when hope seemed to have abandoned him and Isaiah was sadly dozing in his chair, he was awakened by the sudden closing of his office door.

Jim Brooks came rushing in.

"Hello, Jim," said Isaiah, rising from his seat, "whut yo' feelin' so spry 'bout?"

"Aw, I ain't feelin' spry 'bout nuthin'," answered Jim, "I'se come on sad business!"

Isaiah's heart gave a bound. "Ain't in trouble, is yo'?" he alertly inquired.

"Well, not exactly," said Jim, "yo' see my wife's mother jes' died in one o' dem spells o' her'n an' I come ter see yo' ter git yo' ter bury her."

Isaiah's pulse lost a count or two—Jim was rather poor and business needed a rich client now.

"Well, dat's too bad, Jim," he said, in his best professional voice of consolation, "but, sooner or later it comes ter all."

"Oh, I reckon it's fer de best," answered Jim, trying to suppress his enthusiasm. He turned to Isaiah who looked expectantly at him and continued, "Yo' see, de ole lady 'blonged ter de Sisters and Brudders ob Heabenly Rest, an' as I is de treasurer of dat organization, dey hev specify me ter make de funeral arrangements."

Isaiah smiled. "Well, I'll do it up fine, Jim, an' de organization will be proud," and he rubbed his hands together genially. "How much do dey want ter spend on Sister Smith?"

"Well, dey usually 'lows two hundred dollars fur a member ob long standin' lik' her."

The business-like undertaker looked solemn.

"Well, ef dey pays me in advance I kin git things

a lil' quicker, an' I tak' it yo' hev' no pertic'lar reason ter keep her a long time?" he asked.

"Oh no—no—I have persuaded my wife ter let us bring de body heah to yo' establishment, as it's near de chu'ch an' buryin' ground."

This arrangement agreed upon, the two men wended their way to Jim's little house and soon the remains of Sister Smith were reposing in Isaiah's rear room. Once or twice as he looked at her, the undertaker experienced a creepy feeling. He remembered the time the old woman had chased him angrily out of her kitchen when he had tried "keepin' company" with her daughter 'Liza.

But she was harmless now!

He finished arraying Sister Smith in one of those nice dresses, *all front*, which were the style for such occasions. Concentrating on the front, you got a fine dress for a little money—and the back did not show, anyhow!

He was glad to be through with his work before night arrived. He had never liked the old woman, and even in death she looked as though she might scold him at any minute. In his secret heart, he was glad she was silenced forever.

Taking a parting survey of the room where she lay in state, when all was ready, he softly walked out and closed the door.

It was a still, moonlight night and being July, the weather was warm. Isaiah turned down his one big oil lamp to lessen the heat, and went outside the door and seated himself under a tree.

A delegate, from The Sisters and Brothers of Heavenly Rest, had visited him earlier in the evening and had brought a hundred and fifty dollars towards the funeral expenses, the rest to be paid when the funeral was over.

Now he felt in his trousers pocket and patted the money which reposed there.

He decided to walk over and pay Mr. Cohen his debt and have that off of his mind. So he closed the street door and went on his errand. He was gone but a little while and when he returned decided to go directly to bed. He went to his room over the office, and prepared to retire. His mind at peace over his finances, he quickly fell into a dreamless sleep.

How long he had slept, he never knew, but he was awakened with an eerie feeling, thinking he heard a noise in the room below—or was it in the room where the old lady's body reposed?

The alarmed negro pulled the edge of the quilt down from one eye, and peered into the darkness.

Distinctly he heard that sound again, as of somebody or something moving about.

He shiveringly got out of bed, pulled on his pants, and tiptoed to the head of the stairs, which led down into his office below.

The door to the room, where the old lady lay, was directly at the foot of the stairs and it would be necessary that he pass that door to reach the front entrance of the establishment.

Breathlessly he listened.

The sound emanated from that gruesome back room. What could it be?

Tales of ghosts and "hants" came to him. His kinky hair began to uncurl and rise in terror. The man with a call broke into a cold sweat and his knees fairly shook as he heard approaching footsteps.

He decided to make a desperate rush for the front door below and to get ahead of whatever the thing was that was walking around down there.

As fast as his shaking limbs would carry him, he crept down the stair. An indiscreet board creaked horribly beneath his feet, and immediately all became silent in that dreadful room! As the terrified negro reached his office, the threatening handle of the dividing door slowly turned. Isaiah gave a leap and landed in the middle of the office where he stood fairly frozen to the spot.

That door had opened and in the dim half light of the room could be discerned the figure of Jim's mother-in-law.

She was rubbing her eyes as if trying to accustom them to the light. She was dressed as he had left her in her fine grave dress, but as her consciousness became more acute she surveyed her finery with surprise; her surprise turned to consternation, as having smoothed the front of the garment, her hand reached behind and she realized her half-nude condition.

Evidently she had not discovered Isaiah, and that gentleman tried in vain to make his feet obey his desire to depart.

Sister Smith let out a sudden yell! "My Lordy! I'se done buried an' a'walkin' into Purgatory!"

Isaiah, at the sound of her voice, fell on his knees. "Oh, Lord, save me from de power o' Satan!" he wailed.

The old woman paused at the sound of another voice, and then in the dusk she discovered the figure of a man.

He was so overcome with terror that at first she did not recognize him. Slowly she moved nearer and as she reached out her hand to touch him, Isaiah, by supreme effort, made for the door.

The light from the street lamp fell full across his face and the reanimated old woman recognized him.

"Yo' black debbil!" she shouted. "Whut yo' mean, puttin' me in dat dark back room, an' in dese heah daid clothes?"

"Yo's daid," answered Isaiah with a shaking tone of finality.

"Daid, is I?" screamed the irate old woman, as she made a dive for him.

The man with a call upset a chair in his haste to get out of the way of the ex-corpse.

"I'll show yo' jes' how daid I is," and grabbing up a broom the infuriated creature started after him.

Down one street and up another the revived woman followed in hot pursuit until the cool morning air, blowing on her back, brought her to a realization of her costume and she gave up the chase.

The frightened negro dodged into an open garden door and sank breathless in a flower bed.

There was much consternation among the darkies the next day when it became known that Jim's mother-in-law had come back to life.

The trance, which the colored population had believed fatal, proved to be only one of greater duration than the many shorter ones which had preceded it during her long life.

Miss Rita, the next morning, went into her garden to gather roses and was greatly surprised to find her erstwhile serving man sleeping soundly in the rose bed.

He opened his alarmed eyes as she called his name, and sat up looking dazedly at her.

"Why, Isaiah!" she exclaimed, "what in the world are you doing here?"

Isaiah reached out and touched the hem of Miss Rita's dress and reverently pressed his lips to it.

"Please, mam," he implored, "let me come back and buttle fer yo'!"

"What's the trouble with the undertaking business?" she asked.

"Oh, Miss Rita," he shivered. "I jes' nacherly los' my taste fur it! Yo' can't never tel' when folks is whut yo' thinks dey is, an'," he added lamely, "I doan want ter eber heah o' no more business lik' dat!"

He cast a pious eye heavenward.

"De money is oncertain, sick folks is oncertain an' doan always die—an' eben de daid doan always stay daid—dey's oncertain too!"

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